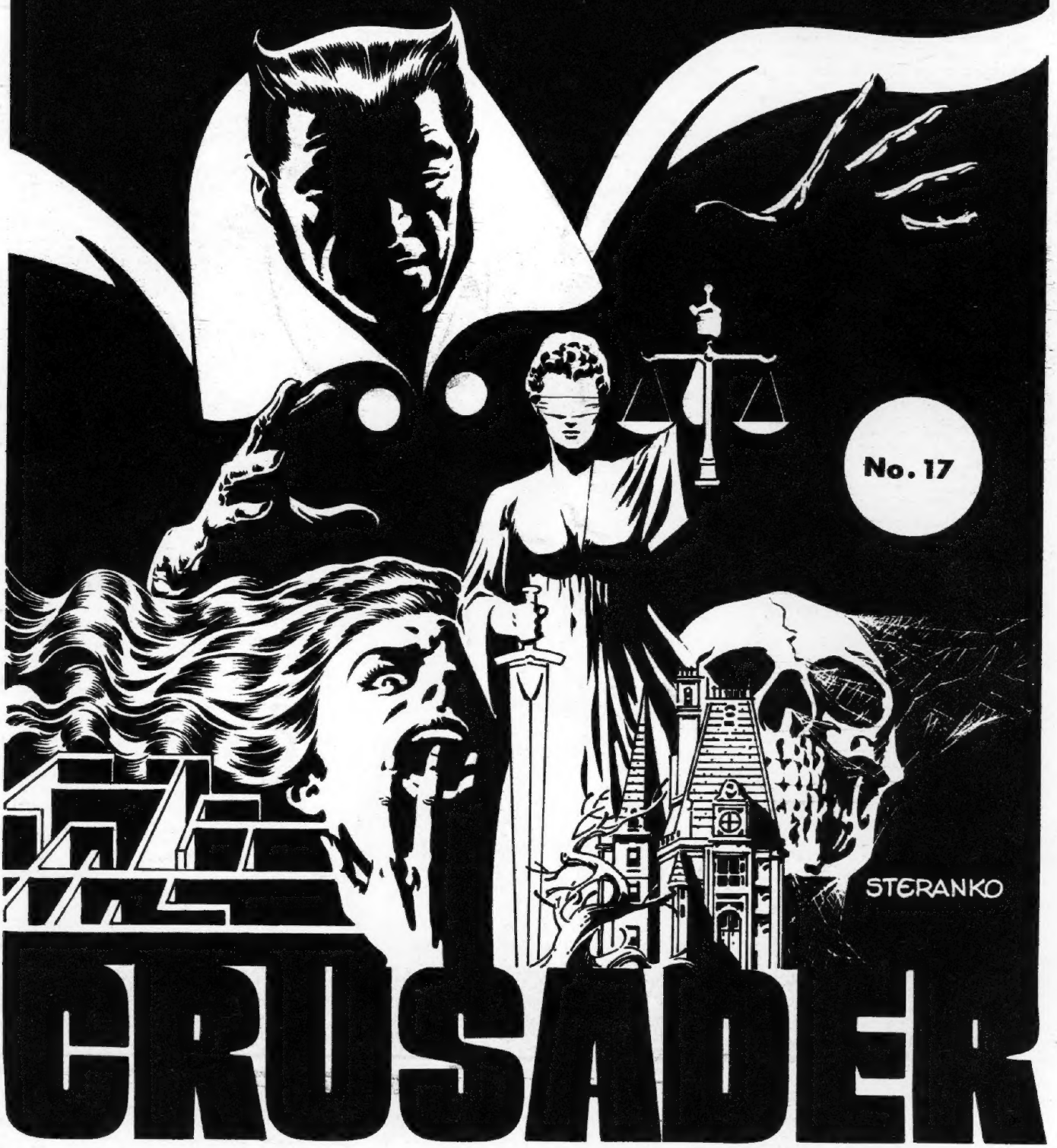
# COMIC CRUSADER



# CRUSADER COMMENTS

The man in black, pictured below, is also known as DEATH! It is most appropriate that he is the lead feature for this issue---because this issue marks the death of COMIC CRUSADER!

Over the years I've presented some of the best researched articles ever presented in fandom, top notch interviews and art by some of the finest amateurs and professionals. In doing this I've always kept C.C. at an affordable level. I'm truly pleased that you readers have enjoyed this publication and made it one of the most read in fandom. I'm also thankful to the many fans and pros who have helped me along the way. I couldn't have done it without them.

Now it's time for me to move in other directions. C.C. is dead, at least for the time being, but who knows what the future holds. One item in the future is COMIC CRUSADER STORYBOOK. You can read about that on the last page of this issue.

For those of you who have subscribed beyond this issue, you will find a refund with it. I don't wish to apply it to "Storybook" as I have no idea what it will cost at this time.

About this issue...I want to thank all concerned! You've helped C.C. go out with a bang! It's especially fitting that a JIM STERANKO cover graces this last issue, since Jim was on hand in the first. He gave me C.C.'s first pro interview and we've been friends ever since. This cover is © Jim Steranko 1976.

BOB COSGROVE is represented in this issue. To my mind he is fandom's BEST WRITER. He's been with me since C.C.'s beginning and we have a friendship that can't be expressed in words. BOB, this issue is dedicated to you!

(continued on inside back cover.)

**article by:**
**BOB COSGROVE**
**art by:**
**Martin L. Greim &**
**Bill Black**

Sometimes, in the world of comics, a publishing failure is an aesthetic success. Such was the case with one of the most unusual characters ever to appear in comics---the mysterious

# MAN in BLACK

The Man in Black's career spanned twenty-one years---from 1945 to 1966, and in that time he appeared in many titles from Harvey Comics: All New Comics #'s 11 & 14, Front Page Comic Book #1, Green Hornet Comics #'s 31 thru 34, Kerry Drake #10, Thril-O-Rama #'s 1 thru 3, and, for a brief time, in his own magazine Man in Black. It has been said that there were five issues of Man in Black, however attempts to locate the fifth issue - including a notice in the Buyer's Guide and letters to a number of leading collectors and dealers - proved unsuccessful.

The Man in Black made his initial appearance in All New Comics #11, Spring, 1945, a Harvey comics title featuring a line-up of also-ran characters: Boy Heroes, Girl Commandos, and several general short stories. In the middle of the book was the Man in Black, narrating a story entitled "Death picks a Victim!" Except for the imposing figure of the Man in Black, standing to the left of the story, arms folded, the reader might take it for another filler. In fact, the figure identifies himself as "the man in the shadows---or as you may know me---DEATH." He appears in black tuxedo, with cape. Beneath his silver, satanic hair, his face is totally obscured by shadow. After introducing his friend, the helmeted "Destruction," the Man in Black tells a war time tale, of two brothers. When Captain Richard Kipp is listed as missing after a January 26, 1944 bombing raid in Berlin, his younger brother (who apparently has no first name, since even his brother calls him "Kipp") sneaks aboard another flight, determined to find him. Kipp is shot down, and crashes in a small German farmyard. There the underground befriends him, assisting him thru France to Dunkirk, where he finally finds his brother. As the two brothers prepare to depart, they are accosted by a squad of Nazis. As the Man in Black tells it,

> ---suddenly the sky was filled with a roar and the scream of many falling bombs rent the air... and a tremendous blast shook the earth...and out of this tumilt came DESTRUCTION'S horrible laugh---clutching my arm, he held me back as I reached for Dick and Kipp.

Explaining that Death cheated him at Lille, where "there were many dead but no destruction," Destruction adds that as bombers, Kipp and Dick are his friends and assistants. The Man in Black reluctantly contents himself with a few Nazis, then bids the reader good night.

The artwork for the Man in Black was by S. Robert (Bob) Powell, who also toiled on the Shadow and a number of second string characters for Harvey Pubs. Suprisingly, the Man in Black's first splash page bears the words "A Martin Epp Feature," prominently displayed under the title. Epp was an assistant of Powell's who did inking and lettering, and was not yet working for publishers on a direct basis. Howard Nostrand, who also worked with Powell, dismisses the credit line as "a gag. Someone was being funny, or perhaps Bob didn't want to sign the story for some reason and decided, what the hell, put Marty's name in there." Most later stories were signed by Powell, and all the stories appear to be his work.

In addition to his work at Harvey, Powell drew what Jules Fieffer called "the best of the magician strips (not excepting Mandrake)" Mr. Mystic, a back-up feature to Will Eisner's Sunday Spirit sections, and churned out "Sheena, Queen of the Jungle" for Fiction House. Another famous Powell strip was Bobby Benson and his B-Bar-B Riders. For a short time, in the early sixties Powell worked at Marvel, drawing the Torch and Thing strip for Strange Tales, and pencilling a few Daredevil stories which Wally Wood inked.

Powell's early work on Man in Black displays his skill at drawing air craft. As the strip developed, Powell perfected his compositional style, eschewing stock shots, and substituting an array of beautifully individualistic homely facial shots for the standard heroic faces.

The Man in Black's next appearance is in Front Page Comic Book, where he holds the lead spot in a ten page feature entitled "Death is a Co-Pilot." After introducing himself as "your story teller---the Man in Black"---he proceedes with a routine tale about Von Pagel, a conceited German ace, double-crossed by his commanders, who is shot down by American fliers. In this story, the Man in Black enters the action, conversing with Von Pagel, and riding along in the cockpit until the final moment, when the hapless ace suddenly realizes the identity of his guest. This story introduces "Fate," a young brown-haired woman in flowing green robes, who sits "weaving her strands." She appears in but three panels of the story and has no important role.

Not until Green Hornet #31, Nov. - Dec., 1946, does the Man in Black return, in "Tale of Treachery." This story is a good example of war-time excess. Lieutenant J. B. "Biff" Ryan, of the U.S. Army Air Corps says goodbye to a small wedding party. The bride: his sister. The groom: his best friend, "Suboto." The place: Sverabaya, Java. The date: Dec. 8th, 1941. Biff is no sooner airborne when he turns on the radio and learns of the Pearl Harbor

**DEATH & DESTRUCTION**

bombing. His reaction is intense:

Pearl Harbor! War!! And
My Sister is the Bride of
Suboto Osato--A Jap!...
An Enemy! My Enemy!...
It must be a mistake!
It's got to be!!

Within an instant, Biff's "best friend" is now a "Jap," an "enemy." And no, it isn't a mistake. Suboto throws his own wife in prison, and in the end, she stabs him to death. The story is also regressive in that the Man in Black has become a mere narrator, of the EC-Dr. Graves-Mysterious Traveller sort. For the first time, however, the splash panel is signed "Powell."

The Man in Black's non-involvement continues in his next story, also signed by Powell, which appears in the following issue of Green Hornet Comics, #32. With the war over, the Man in Black narrates a semi-comic sunken treasure story.

With Green Hornet #33, however, the series shows more promise, beginning with the impressive splash, an all black page, save for a spotlight, illuminating a down-shot of the Man in Black, who again variously identifies himself as "Mr. Twilight" and "Death." The plot of this story is simple; daredevil Ken Parks is attempting to set a new record in an experimental jet plane. As he is about to depart, a man races up and asks him to deliver a special serum, "the only thing" that can save a dying little girl in New York. Within this frame-work, various figures from a pop-mythology fight to influence Ken's flight. "Father Time," hoping to end the little girl's life, irritates Mr. Twilight, who seems unaccountably reluctant to perform his duties. On the plane, "Googy the Gremlin," complete with saw and drill fingers, pries away at the wing. The plane crashes, but Ken escapes with the serum, cheating Father Time. Most elements of subsequent Man in Black tales are there - a seemingly simple story complicated by supernatural beings who, unbeknownst to mankind, interfere in the affairs of men; the light, comic tone, playing against the serious story-line; even an imp, Googy, who annoys the Man in Black.

The same elements, handled with increasing confidence and ease, make the Man in Black's next outing, a ten-pager in Green Hornet #34, his finest appearance to date. Mr. Twilight has just claimed Martha Gilmore, a "famous girl doctor" whose plane has crashed in remote Tibet. To his consternation, however, the Oriental Doctor Hideki uses a strange machine to re-turn Martha to life. Frustrated, the Man in Black returns to heaven and tells his story to "The Three Blind Fates" and the green, cloven-hoofed "Imp of Mischief." An angel appears, with a scroll, pre-sumably inscribed by God, who wants no part of Death's problems, and tells Mr. Twilight to figure it out for himself.

Back on earth, Dr. Hideki creates another opportunity for the Man in Black. Wishing to learn if there's an afterlife, he injects Martha with poison, which he explains as "a drug to induce sleep." As Mr. Twilight watches, he makes a curious comment, inconsistent with past adventures and subsequent events in this story. "Tho' I'm Death," he muses, "I can't kill--I'm what happens after they're killed!" Again Martha dies; again Mr. Twilight claims her, telling her spirit, "Don't be afraid--our kingdom is very beautiful and only the joys of earth are increased a hundred fold!"

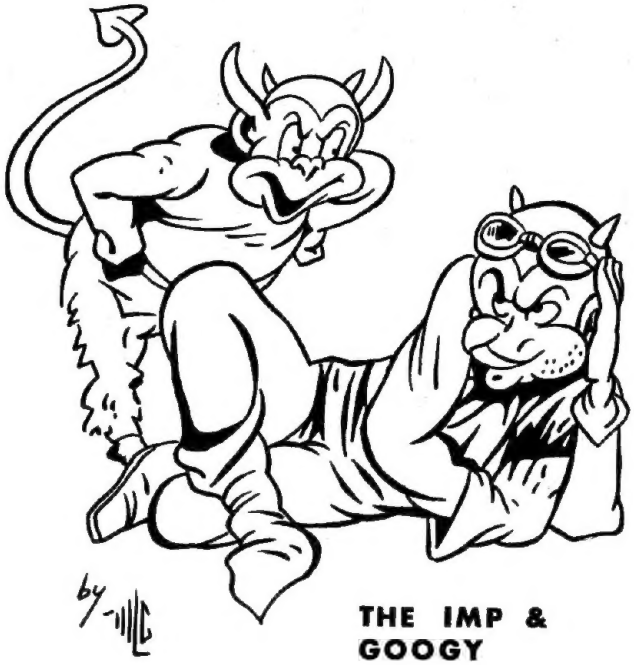
Hideki's machine tears Martha from Death's grasp, and when she recovers consciousness the doctor eagerly questions her. At that moment, "Lt. Len Martin, U.S. Army Air Force" bursts in to collect his fiancee Martha. A struggle ensues, and Hideki shoots Martin. The Man in Black collects Martin's spirit, but as he turns to leave, notes that Hideki is "at it again." Totally exasperated, he appears before Hideki and grapples with him. Len, brought back by Hideki's machine, promptly shoots the doctor, killing him instantly.

Grabbing the Imp, the Man in Black insists he tamper with Martin's plane so Len and Martha will both die. The Imp has other plans, and outwits Mr. Twilight, who chains the Imp in revenge. With this story, a tight plot, Powell's art, the comic interplay between Mr. Twilight and the Imp, all combined into a single effect. The reader could look forward to some ex-citing future adventures. IN VAIN! The Man in Black disappeared. Whether it was economics, bore-dom on Powell's part, or the whim of the publisher, John Donne's famous prediction, "Death, Thou Shalt Die!" finally came true.

Ten years later, the Man in Black made a comeback, this time in his own magazine, dated September, 1957. He looked just about the same as he had in June of 1947, still in tux, cloak, and white gloves. However, the shadows which had always obscured his face now receded somewhat. The reader still couldn't see him clearly, but now there was the suggestion of eyes and eyebrows, a smiling mouth, and the rounded tip of a nose protruding from the shadows.

With him, the Man in Black had a new supporting cast: the blonde and lovely Venus, goddess of Love, and the raven-haired, no-nonsense Weaver, "she who weaves the patterns of life."

The cover hinted at the big change, however, in asking, "Who is the Man in Black?" anyone who had followed him in the forties had a ready answer: "Mr. Twilight. Death." WRONG! Perhaps "M.B.," as the Weaver called him, had spent those ten years thumbing through celestial help-wanted adds. In any case, he had a new job. As he explained it, "Some call me Fate---some Kismet---and others Luck!" In his new role, the Man



**THE IMP & GOOGY**

in Black disliked his old chores. When the Weaver, who seems to be the Man in Black's superior, orders him to collect "those destined for the after-world," he balks, "What did you say?!" he asks incredulously. "Me?!! Why, me!? That's not my job!"

In addition to a special introductory panel, the first issue contains three major Man in Black stories: "Brush Strokes," about an artist who wants to create the world's greatest painting; "The Hanging Thread;" and "The Fly In The Ointment," a lady-or-the-tiger variation set in the mythical past. In addition, the book contains a two-pager, "Second Chance," a science fiction story depicting the way earth was destroyed, then retold to show how it might have been saved; two text tales, and a five-page tale of an ancient gladiator and doomed Pompei, as narrated by the Weaver.

"The Hanging Thread" deserves special mention, both because of its artistic excellence, and its resemblence to a 1941 tale featuring another famous Bob Powell character, Mr. Mystic. (Recounted in "Save Us Magician, Cried We And Came The Answer---'I Failed To Save The One Thing I Loved Most!'" by Tom Fagan, in Comic Crusader #14 - R.C.) The theme of the story is an old one--- "Amor vincit omnia." A group of people aboard a doomed ship engages in an argument--which is stronger, love or Fate? The Weaver and the Man in Black carry on the argument, taking sides against Venus. The discussion ends when Weaver sends Fate to destroy the ship and collect the passengers fated to die. As the ship goes down, Fate appears to the doomed and urges them to go willingly. One woman, however, refuses to allow her husband to go down with the ship, and insists he join her in the life boat. Angered, Fate chastizes the woman, then destroys the life boat. Undaunted, the woman pulls her unconcious husband aboard a raft. Weaver, annoyed, sends Fate back to finish the job. In an instant, Fate's shadowy form materializes, hovering above the life raft. "Your husband is a little late for his appointment!", he reminds her.

> "I---I've been expecting you---" she replies.
> "Then you know he must go!"
> "Must he?! Can't you see how much I love him?"
> "I'm sorry but love is meaningless!---When it comes to Fate!"
> And then---"As I reached for the man a tear dropped on my glove! I drew back my hand as if it were burned and stared at it---a single glistening tear---the epitome of human sorrow 'the symbol of anguish---and of everlasting love!' I felt like a heel! I couldn't do it! I'd face the music with the Weaver but I had to let him go!"

The Man in Black turns and vanishes. The woman, arms cradled about her husband, murmurs two words, "T-Thank you."

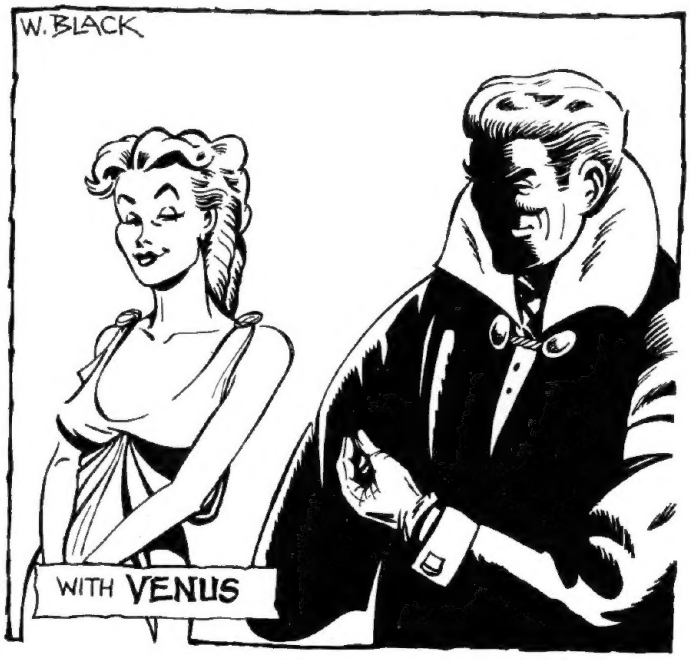
But the story is not over. The final page features a comic conclusion--the Weaver chewing out Fate, and Venus flinging a cloud of tears and kidding Fate about his alleged omnipotence. Like all the stories in this issue, the art is outstanding. Powell abandons the pen in favor of stylish brush work. He has clearly learned much about composition and perspective, and peoples his stories with a variety of facial types instead of standard heroic faces. The immortals--- Venus, Weaver, and the Man in Black himself---are skillfully rendered with zip-a-tone and double tone.

It was in the second issue that Man in Black underwent his final refinements. In "Betrayed," another character, Cupid, makes his debut; teaming up with mother Venus to create problems for Fate. Weaver has ordered Fate to see to it that a beautiful girl spy betrays her country, but Cupid makes her fall in love with a patriot, so that at the last moment, she instead doublecrosses her cohorts. Man in Black is furious, but Weaver is philosophical. "I like this ending better than mine! And might I add, that it's a good thing I do or you, Venus, and you, Cupid, would be finished! Done! Kaput! For messin' around." Powell's cupid is a homely, exasperating little cherub, the direct descendent of Googy and the Imp.

The two page feature also undergoes a change. Abandoning the Future, the Man in Black in "This is How It Might Have Happened," shows Caesar's armies wiped out at the Rubicon, then on the following page, demonstrates how his timely interference enabled Caesar to cross the Rubicon and become emperor of Rome.

Obviously, Powell and company had hit on an entertaining formula. First, select an event in History. Second, think of events that would prevent History from

**DEATH'S EMBRACE**




happening as it did. Finally, create entertaining ways for Fate to thwart those events. In "Menace on the Iron Horse," Powell follows this formula to the letter. He invents a man to assassinate Lincoln on a train, then has Fate kill him, allowing Lincoln to continue guiding his country until he finally keeps a postponed engagement with an assassain's bullet. Fate's methods are simple--He'll stick a train seat so it can't be moved, trip a man, lead a curious bear to an emergency flare. Powell dramatizes these ordinary events effectively, shrinking Fate to tiny size, or depicting him as a towering giant holding up a bridge. Other stories in issue two are "Crack-Up," with Fate saving the life of a race-car driver, and the inevitable Powell airplane tale, a World War I adventure entitled, "The Indestructable One." The splash reads, "Staring The Weaver," but she appears only in the first and last panels.

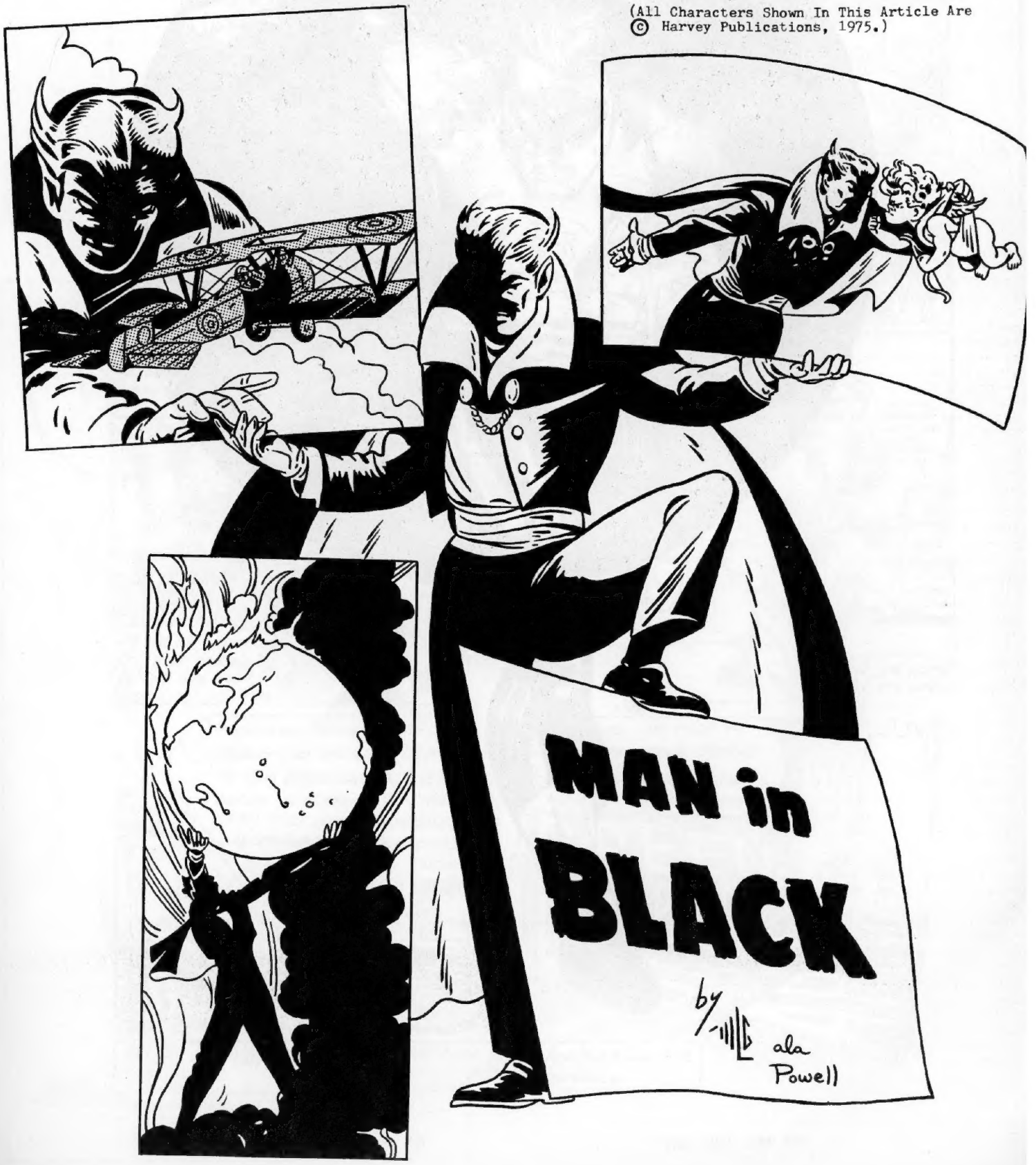
Issue #3 of the Man in Black bears the only striking cover of the series, and depicts Fate swinging from a falling W.W.I aircraft. (Issue one had Fate watching a girl jump from a painting; #2, Fate saving Lincoln; and #4 Fate playing chess with various people and objects.) Stories for this issue fit the now-familiar mode: in "The Plotter," Fate saves the life of Pharaoh Ikhnaton, even as he saved Lincoln in issue #2; "The Invention," shows how a World War I fighter pilot inadvertently kills an enemy airman who, years ago, had saved his life; Weaver presents a pre-W.W.II Dirigible story, about a love-smitten young man who is saved from flying on the doomed Hindenburg; and "This is How It Might Have Happened" has the Man in Black saving a non-entity named Ralph Coe from a train crash. Particularly interesting is the lead story in this issue, "The Genius," which features a young sculptor who wins the gratitude of Alexander the Great and goes on to sculpt the famed Nike of Samothrace. To introduce the sculptor to Alexander, Fate employs the aid of Thor and Vulcan, whom Powell depicts in semi-comic fashion. "The Genius" embodies many of the strengths and weaknessess of the Man in Black magazine. On the one hand, the story is well-drawn, set in an exotic locale, and obviously well-researched. On the other---how many youngsters will understand the punchline when they learn that the sculptor is the creator of Nike of Samothrace? Or, in the unlikely event that the stories are aimed at older readers, is the originality of concept, and Powell's marvelous style, enough to compensate for the shortness of the stories (typically five pages) and their frankly formulaic nature? No one can say for certain. What is certain is that the Man in Black appeared for the fourth and final time (as far as we are able to ascertain) in his own magazine with the March,1958 issue. The stories generally followed the previous format. In "Ambush," Fate shows how he assured the massacre at Little Big Horn, "Jim's Eagle" has the Man in Black protecting "Old Sam," the living personification of our coins and emblems. The Weaver's contribution is an ironic tale about a janitor who steals a worthless "treasure," and "This Is How It Might Have Happened" shows Fate saving the life of History's most famous hunchback, AESOP. "The Thief," featuring Fate's friendly antagonists Cupid and Venus, introduces another celestial character, "Duty," a short, balding businessman type, who carries an umbrella. While Fate and Duty work to see that a beautiful female jewl theif is apprehended by a detective, Venus and Cupid seek to blind the detective with love. For a change, Fate successfully completes his assignment, but unfortunately is largely absent from most of the story, as the Cupid/Duty rivalry carries most of the action. With this issue, the Man in Black once again disappeared from the comic stands.

Seven years later, Fate returned in Thrill-O-Rama #1, Oct., 1965. The cover proclaimed,"proudly presents The Man in Black called FATE!" No doubt about M.I.B.'s occupation this time. After the (Paul Reinman-Chick Stone?) cover, showing Fate, arms outstretched dramatically over Saladin, a bound girl in a slab of clay (honest) and three flying "Hate Cupids" as the blurb described them; inside was a splash reprint of page one from MIB #1, and a return of the "This is How It Might Have Happened" from MIB #3. The only new story, inexplicably entitled "The Hate Cupids," has the Weaver and Fate trying to bring sculptor Praextes and his daughter to "Valhalla." Venus and Cupid intervene to save them.

Just as Fate prepares to clobber them in revenge, the Weaver appears and informs him that she's made "a dreadful mistake." Praextes and his daughter are not yet due to die. The remainder of Thrill-O-Rama consists of routine SF stories. One suspects that "The Hate Cupids" was an inventory story from the fifties, although Bob Powell was working for Harvey editor Joe Simon in 1967, and could conceivably have drawn the tale new.

However, in Thrill-O-Rama #2, Harvey "fearlessly" (the adjective is unintentionally ironic) presents Pirana, an absurd Sub-Mariner/Aquaman copy, drawn by Jack Sparling. Sparling also contributes a five-page Man in Black story, "The Million Dollar Trap," in which Fate leads some greedy swindlers aboard the doomed Andrea Doria ocean liner. The art is quite good, so much so that one suspects Sparling worked from Powell's layouts. Though a Sparling Weaver story appeared in Thrill-O-Rama #3, the Man in Black had vanished once again. And with the unfortunate death of Bob Powell perhaps it would be in Fate's best interest to leave his adventures unrecorded in the pages of a comic magazine.

(All Characters Shown In This Article Are © Harvey Publications, 1975.)



Art by: GIL KANE

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YOU KNOW, GL, I CAN'T HELP BUT GET NERVOUS WITH ALL THOSE PEOPLE STARING AT US WHENEVER...
YOU MEAN WHENEVER WE RIDE THROUGH TOWN IN ONE OF MY MIRACULOUSLY IMAGINITIVE RING-POWERED VEHICLES, GA?
Alladin's
NO, I MEANT WHENEVER WE GOTO TOWN AND YOU HAPPEN TO FORGET YOUR PANTS!
OH.
MOMMY- WHY DOES THAT MAN.. DRP
NEXT TO ME I LIKE BYD BEST!
BY THE WAY, WHY DO I HAVE TO RIDE IN THE SIDECAR?
BOY, LUCKY THING THIS KID FUKUMITSU USES BORDERS ON HIS PANELS- NOT LIKE MY REGULAR ARTIST!
BY THE BY, GL, WHERE ARE WE GOING?
YMCA
HEY!
JEEZUS! MUST BE A CUPLA HIPPIES!
Mac's Trucking
C'MON, WE GOTTA GO MEET THE GIRLS!
YESSIREE, FOLKS, SONNY AND I ARE BACK AGAIN, THIS TIME TO BRING YOU ANOTHER CHAPTER OF THE CRIME FIGHTING CAREERS OF TWO CRUSADING SUPER HEROES WHO CHAMPION REFORM AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS! YES, YOU'RE RIGHT, KIDDIES- NONE OTHER THAN THAT BIO-DEGRADABLE, HYPO-ALLERGENIC, SOCIALLY CONCIOUS, MORALLY FANATIC TWOSOME,
GREEN LAMPLIGHT
ART BY: Keith "the TOAD" Fukumitsu
STORY BY: Keith Fukumitsu * Gary Kato * Dennis Fujitake *

WHERE ARE THOSE TWO GUYS, CAROL? YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES I THINK THOSE TWO ARE KINDA STRANGE!
YOU'RE TELLING ME? TWO GROWN MEN DRESSED IN TIGHTS RUNNING ALL OVER TOWN CHASING CROOKS WITH ARROWS AND A RING?
I TAKE IT BACK- THEY'RE PLENTY STRANGE!
YEEEEK!
GOTCHA!
SMEK
C'MON CAROL- WE WERE ONLY KIDDIN'.. HONEST!
WELL, NOW THAT WE'VE NO DATES- WHAT'LL WE DO TONIGHT? SAY, I KNOW, I JUST GOT SOME FILMS IN THE MAIL TODAY!
SURE, AS SOON AS MY EYE IS OKAY!
SAY, WHAT KIND OF MOVIE IS THIS? MUST BE ONE OF THOSE EUROPEAN "ART" MOVIES! SAY- WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT CHICK?
HEY! THAT GUY!
YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE GUY?!
GREAT ZOT! IT- IT'S MY OLD BUDDY... PIEFACE!
DOWN IN FRONT- YER BLOCKING OUT THE BEST PART!

NO! I CAN'T SEE MORE!
HOLY COW! THAT WAS MY BEST PROJECTOR!
SO, OUR HEROES STRIKE OUT AT THE PORNO MOVIE HOUSES, SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROYING ONE BY ONE....
the BARE
Disney the BAREFOOT EXECUTIVE
HAH! GOT ANOTHER ONE! THE TITLE NEVER MADE THE MARQUEE!
HEY, GL, I THINK WE GOOFED THIS ONE!
WAIT! I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA!
HUGH HIFNER?
THE BEST WAY IS TO DESTROY THE SOURCE!
GHAAK!! NO—URK! THE MOVIE MAKERS
I THINK WE LOST 'EM!
GA! LOOK!
OSCAR'S HOUSE
LASCIVIOUS PRODUCTION
MOVIES! PHOTOS! RENTALS! LIVE SHOWS! MASSAGES!
IF IT'S DONE BY US, IT'S LASCIVIOUS!
BEN
THIS IS IT! LET'S GET 'EM!
GET 'EM BEN!
WANTED: 1 BURRO 2 SNAKES 5 PONIES 7 SHEEP
STAGE DOOR
WE CATER: BIRTHDAY PARTIES LUNCHEONS BAR MITZVAHS CHINESE NEW YEARS.
I'LL JUST BREAK THE DOOR DOWN WITH A BIG SHOULDER SMASH!
SPLAT
IT DIDN'T WORK! MAYBE...
OOO! HEY...
BACKFLIP!
MUNCH
MAYBE IF I OPEN THE...
TWO FISTED DOUBLE ARM FRONTAL SLAMMO
...DOOR.
CAN'T DALLY, OILY! WE'VE GOT TO FIND THE BRAINS OF THE OPERATION!
WON'T THE BODY DO INSTEAD?
YEAH, GL, COME BACK LATER! NOW, BEAUTIFUL, HOWS ABOUT A DATE?
*&G!?#!

THEY'VE GOT US CORNERED!
I'LL JUST PULL OUT ONE OF MY TRICK ARROWS AND..
MEANWHILE, I'LL ZAP 'EM WITH MY RING!
Y!!
GOSH, WHERE'S MY SPECIAL PUNCH ARROW?
AND MASH 'EM WITH THIS TANK!
JUST A MINUTE, GL, AND I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU!
AND POLISH 'EM OFF WITH THIS N-BOMB! BY THE WAY, GA, WHATCHA DOIN'?
POP
I'M HAVING LUNCH! I FOUND ONE OF MY BURGER ARROWS!
THIS MUST BE WHERE THE BOSS' OFFICE IS!
HOW CAN YOU TELL?
LET'S CALL IT A LUCKY GUESS!
SAY, I LIKE HIS DECOR!
LET'S GO IN THERE AND GET HIM!
THE BOSS
THE BIG MAN
DOWN THIS WAY
COME ON IN!
TO THE BOSS
HOLD IT! INSTEAD OF BREAKING IT DOWN, CAN'T WE JUST OPEN IT?
OKAY, JUST TAKE IT EASY— IT MIGHT BE BOOBY...
KABLOIE
...TRAPPED.
NOW WE'VE GOT YOU, YOU DEALER IN SHUT! IT'S ABOUT TIME SOMEONE HAS GIVEN YOU..
HEY, LOOK!
...YOUR JUST DESSERTS! YOU AND YOUR KIND ARE THE VERMIN WE DECENT PEOPLE MUST COMBAT! HENCE...! NOT NOW, GA!
HERO SPEECH #6
GL, YOU GOTTA SEE...
WHAT IS IT?
P-PIEFACE!
MOTHER
LOOK!

YOU- YOU'RE THE BIG MAN?
OF COURSE, GREEN LANTERN-LIGHT, DOES IT SURPRISE YOU?
BUT, I THOUGHT I HAD TAUGHT YOU ALL THE NOBLE TRAITS, HOW TO BE A NICE GUY?
AND... I SAW YOU IN THAT MOVIE- I...
THAT OLD THING? WELL, WHAT GOOD IS OWNING AN OUTFIT LIKE THIS IF YOU CAN'T HAVE FUN?
NOW, COME OFF IT, GL! YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT THIS IS BIG BUSINESS! MILLIONS OF BUCKS A YEAR! I WORKED MY WAY UP THE LADDER TO WHERE I AM TODAY! GOOD OLD USA FREE ENTERPRISE! WHY, I'M ALMOST WHAT YOU COULD CALL A PATRIOT!
IT MATTERS NOT, PIEFACE! IT IS ALL EVIL, AND I MUST DESTROY YOU!
"X" RATED
GO AHEAD, GL, IF IT'LL HELP YOU GET YOUR ROCKS OFF! YAWN
MY RING- IT HAD NO EFFECT AT ALL! HOWCUM?
REMEMBER, I WAS AROUND YOU FOR A LONG TIME! I KNOW THE WEAKNESS OF YOUR RING! LOOK AT ME, GL! I'M A YELLOW MAN!
LOOKS LIKE I'VE FAILED, PIE-FACE! SNIF
DON'T FRET, GL! I'VE GOT A DEAL FOR YOU! GA, TOO!
NO! NEVER! NO DEALS!
YOU SURE? IT COULD BE VERY INTERESTING!
YOU CAN'T ENTICE ME! AFTER ALL, I'VE GOT HONOR!
TOO BAD- IT PAYS A LOT OF MONEY!
MONEY?!
HEY, GL- HOWCOME YOU GET ALL THE GOOD JOBS AND ALL I AM IS A STAND-IN?
WELL, YOU UNDERSTAND, I KNOW THE OWNER, I'M BETTER LOOKING, AND ONE MORE THING...
WHAT'S THAT?
YOUR NAME. WITH A NAME LIKE QUEEN, WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?
Hang Sully, the End.

**INTERVIEW:**

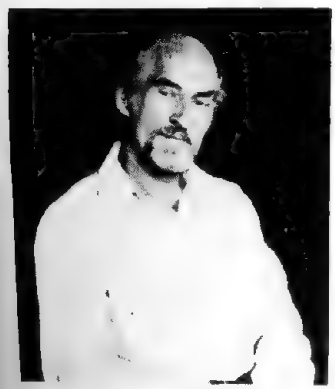
# STAN PITT

**by**

## JOHN SNOWDEN

Stan Pitt is one of Australia's foremost illustrators. America has been fortunate to view his work, every so often, when he's filled in for Al Williamson on his Secret Agent Corrigan newspaper strip, done a sf strip for DC and had various pieces of his work published in fanzines. I am honored to present this fine interview by John Snowden and to print for the first time an unpublished Gully Foyle page by Stan Pitt. - MLG

*NOTE: Special thanks to John Ryan for help in proof reading and making available many of the illustrations to accompany this article. Thanks also to Martin Greim for making this space available.



**STAN PITT**

JS: Could you give me some details of your early life -- how did you become interested in art and drawing?

SP: I was always interested in art as far back as I can remember. My earliest drawings were of cowboys -- I think I was about 5 or 6 years old. I remember I was always getting into trouble at school for drawing when I should have been busy with my lessons, so I suppose it could be predicted that I would one day become a comic artist.

JS: What comics did you admire?

SP: I was first captivated by Mandrake the Magician, then came Superman and Tarzan. My favorite comic books of the late '30's and early '40's were Action and Adventure from DC.

JS: When did you first start to become interested in Alex Raymond?

SP: When I was about 14 or 15.

JS: You saw the Sunday pages?

SP: I saw a page and was really knocked out -- you know, I just could not believe it; it was so magnificent; so far above everything I'd ever seen. So I devoted the next 5 or 6 years to studying the style.

JS: How did you study the style? By drawing pictures of anatomy etc?

SP: First of all I drew a few pages -- rather, I should say copied them, just to get the feel of the strip. Of course, I realised copying other peoples work would get me nowhere, so I tried to absorb it -- look at the thing and try to make something out of it along the same style. In time, it all began to fall into place...I found myself and began to develop ideas of my own.

JS: You must have had a very great natural ability for art...

SP: I had a very great natural love for art -- it doesn't extend much beyond that.

JS: Did you ever have any kind of formal education in art?

SP: No, nothing -- just looking and absorbing.

JS: What company are you working for at the moment?

SP: Cleveland Press.

JS: The paintings for those soft cover western paperbacks?

SP: Yes.

JS: Have you ever thought of doing any comic work again?

SP: Yes, I'm very interested in doing Gully Foyle again...but this time it will be for my own satisfaction, just for a private hobby.

JS: Do you think it would ever get published?

SP: I don't think I'd ever get the money for it -- for that reason I wouldn't have any motive in doing it commercially.

JS: Would you be able to give me the story behind Gully Foyle?

SP: Well, I think that's just about been done to death... all this information is rather tedious to go over because it was quite a traumatic experience for us. We were so set on getting it syndicated only to discover that Alfred Bester had sold the property out from underneath us. It was a pretty hard break. It cost my brother, Reg, quite a bit of money...somewhere around $3000 to get established. We had to have an office/studio for us all to work etc. and there were all sorts of hidden expenses not to mention the cost of postings to Syndicates all over the world. It was quite a thing to get blown out in the end. All the first postings we made to the Syndicates were of expensive bromides mounted on heavy board, designed and made by Reg to accomodate all 15 pages. He was determined to give Gully Foyle the finest possible presentation. The postage and insurance for these cost around $80 per box. (What fools we mortals be!) Reg and I are great believers in quality. We didn't want success for nothing. We wanted to earn it. The boxes were elaborately beautiful affairs which reminded one of the Sarcophagus of Tutankhumun.

JS: How did you become interested in Gully Foyle?

SP: Well, Reg is a sf buff from way back and he discovered this story about 15 years ago, not long after it first came out...and right from the first time he read it he said, "This thing is great, it's a natural for your art...what you've been looking for, waiting for." He was convinced, but it took a long time, about 5 or 6 years, to get into it. We never lost interest. I think we did about 15 original pages before we tried anything...we wanted to get this much ahead in case we had any good fortune. And then we met John Ryan who decided to send it overseas to a place where he thought would be a good venue for it. We had no luck there so we tried 5 or 6 others and one of them, Ledger Syndicate, was very interested. The only thing was that we had to redraw the pages because we had a format that was unsuitable for the modern newspaper breakdowns -- so we went through it, again, redrawing everything. The President of Ledger Syndicate, John Higgins, finally sold it to 50 newspapers in America -- and then we got the news that we couldn't use it because Alfred Bester had sold the rights to Ashley Famous Agency in New York. John Ryan wrote to them and asked if it was possible to continue with the strip -- but the company didn't want to sell it this way. They thought it might ruin the chances of sellin it as a film or TV property and that if it went into comics it might destroy the interest. So, that was the end of that! Anyway, they'll probably never make it into a film as, according to Reg, it'd cost them far too much to do it properly. You are familiar with the story?

JS: Oh, yes -- it's just a shame that things folded right at the very end for you.

SP: It's a great story, isn't it? After all, we had just scratched the surface. We were going to go back over some of the first things we missed, introduce ideas like jaunting and things like that.

JS: Why wasn't the jaunting included in the original 15 pages?

CAPTAIN POWER
BY
STANLEY PITT AND GERRY BROWN
A CREW IS BEING SENT OUT BY FLYING BOAT TO TAKE THE VANDALIA BACK TO PORT. NOW, BOURKE, LET'S HAVE YOUR STORY!
IT HORRIFIES ME TO THINK OF IT.... FIVE DAYS AGO, THE VANDALIA WAS STEAMING ALONG THROUGH A CALM SEA
"THOSE OF THE ACTIVE PASSENGERS WHO WEREN'T ON THE TENNIS COURTS OR AROUND THE SWIMMING POOLS WERE ON THE LOWER DECKS....
PLAYING SHUFFLEBOARD, ALL WERE ENJOYING THEMSELVES ....TRAGICALLY UNAWARE OF WHAT LAY AHEAD.
"I WAS ON A ROUTINE JOB, CHECKING THE SMOKE HELMET. THEN I HEARD THE CAPTAIN AND OFFICERS TALKING EXCITEDLY....
...WHAT THEY HAD SEEN STARTLED ME, TOO ...HANGING LOW OVER THE WATER DIRECTLY AHEAD WAS A HUGE GREENISH CLOUD.
"THE VANDALIA KNIFED INTO THE CLOUD, AND EVERYONE AT THE BOW FELL WRITHING TO THE DECK 'SOLEMN GAS!" THE CAPTAIN CRIED OUT
"I THOUGHT OF THE HELMET, AND PUT IT ON JUST AS THE GAS HIT THE BRIDGE. I SAW THE CAPTAIN AND OFFICERS FALL.
"THE HELMET DID ITS JOB, AND THROUGH THE FACE GLASS I SAW THE SHIP ENVELOPED IN THE GAS AND EVERYONE ABOARD DIE.... IT WAS TERRIBLE!"
YOU HAVE HAD AN AWFUL SHOCK, BOURKE. BUT GO ON WITH THE STORY. IT IS MOST IMPORTANT
TO BE CONTINUED

SP: We decided to skip it as we felt it might have been just a little bit too revolutionary...also, it was rather difficult to establish in drawings. So we were collating and putting ideas aside for the future, whereby this could be done. We could have depicted this type of idea. It's very hard — there's a lot of problems involved.

JS: How long did it take to do a page of Gully Foyle?

SP: I used to devote myself to it for the whole week. I'd taken 5-6 days for some of them.

JS: How did you do the geometric shapes and spirals that appear in some of the Gully Foyle pages?

SP: Well, Reg is very interested in photography and I think he put a ball on a string and spun it...photographing it with time exposure and getting those incredible spiral shapes. We tried to keep that a secret for a long time -- make them wonder at the artist; some of them fell for it! John Ryan did; he couldn't believe it! He said, "Stan, your skill has just become enormous, the things that you can do now!"

JS: What was the first comic strip that you did?

SP: "Anthony Fury" when I was 16, followed by an investigator type strip, "Larry Flynn, Detective," which I did for Frank Johnson Pub. Co. when I was 17. Getting a comic sold here was in some ways a lot easier than in America. The money wasn't bad but the publishers were not as educated on comics, they sort of did it "tongue-in-cheek" -- they didn't care much what it looked like so long as it made money. The American comics had stopped coming over here due to WW 2 and just about anything that they put on paper would sell. The comics were printed on different colored papers, even brown. Frank Johnson was a hard man--still we did get a break from him, getting something printed. He used to pay us $3.00 a page in the early years.

JS: Not much compared to today!

SP: In those days--let me tell you--you were uphill trying to live on it. I had to share mine, as I had a friend writing for me.

JS: Who was the writer?

SP: Frank Ashely.

JS: He wrote most of "Yarmak".

SP: Originally I had two dozen copies of "Yarmak" -- but I've been giving them away ever since I met John Ryan--there's been so many fans since then. There was also a "Silver Starr" comic produced in full color. I had 50 copies of it. Al Williamson got the 2nd last, I had two and sent one away to him.

JS: I knew that there was 1/- color comic, a 6d series and a run that appeared in "King" comics.

SP: That's right, only one issue was printed in full color. 125,000 copies of the 1/- version were printed, expecting to sell the lot, but they only released 50,000 and lost money on it--a couple of thousand pounds I think. They sold 90% of the returns to Woolworth's or Coles for the Christmas stocking trade and got their money back. The rest filtered away to friends of the company and fans who would write requesting copies. The surprising thing is that when the publisher was going to America some years ago he thought that perhaps he might be able to interest somebody over there in "Silver Starr". So he went through his files for a copy and found nothing, not a thing. He had to come and get one out of my files!

JS: Who was the publisher?

SP: Jack Atkins, of Cleveland Pub. Co. I've been with them about 18 years doing mainly Western covers.

JS: I know that at the 1972 Melbourne Eastercon they auctioned off a color copy of "Silver Starr" and it sold for $20.

SP: $20!! You've got to be kidding! What do you think about that?

JS: It shows that some people have good taste!

SP: I wish I'd known that years ago, it would have been more profitable to keep the copies! It truly amazes me!

JS: Back on Gully Foyle, how many sets of promotional pages were made up?

SP: Originally we had a 100 sets made and here again I have only one set left in my files. Reg and I had 25 sets apiece and John Ryan kept the rest for fans and in case something came up and somebody showed interest overseas. Eventually John got down to five, but John used his wisely, only good friends and fans who really appreciated Gully Foyle were given sets. In the main, Reg and I squandered ours by giving them to people with only a random interest in comics. I remember one night particularly when I was talking about Gully Foyle to the taxi cab driver on the way home from Cleveland. He seemed interested so I presented him with a set--he probably threw it out of the cab before he got half way

**Page from UNIVERSAL CONQUEST**

"GET INTO THE CRASH PAD ROOM, CARROL. OUR ANTI GRAVITY MOTOR ISN'T POWERFUL ENOUGH TO COUNTERACT THIS TERRIFIC PULL. HURRY!"
"BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU, NELSON?"
"I'LL BE ALRIGHT. STOP ARGUING AND DO AS I SAY!"
AS CARROL RELUCTANTLY DOES HIS BIDDING, NELSON GRIMLY TURNS TO THE CONTROLS, HIS HEART PULSATING MADLY WITH TENSION...
AND BEADS OF PERSPIRATION TRICKLE SLOWLY DOWN HIS FOREHEAD, IN TINY RIVULETS, AS HE TRIES DESPERATELY TO CHECK THE ROCKET'S DOWNWARD PLUNGE...
BUT ALL HIS EFFORTS ARE IN VAIN AND AS THE SHIP PLUMMETS THRU THE FOREMOST OF VENUS'S CLOUDS HE WHISPERS A SILENT PRAYER AND ABANDONS THE CONTROLS...
"IT'S NO USE, CARROL. THE SHIP'S COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL. WE CAN ONLY HOPE FOR THE BEST. BE READY, DARLING, WE'RE GOING TO CRASH ANY MOMENT, NOW!"
EVEN AS NELSON SPEAKS, THEY ARE JERKED OFF THEIR FEET AND THROWN VIOLENTLY AGAINST THE CRASH PADDED WALLS...
BUT THE SPONGY, SHOCK ABSORBING RUBBER, MERCIFULLY CUSHIONS THE TERRIFIC CONCUSSION AND A MOMENT LATER, NELSON AND CARROL LURCH DAZEDLY TO THEIR FEET, NONE THE WORSE FOR THEIR EXPERIENCE...
"WHEW I'M GLAD THAT'S OVER. ARE YOU ALRIGHT, DARLING?"
"YES, I GUESS SO, NELSON, BUT I'LL BET THE SHIP'S IN PRETTY BAD SHAPE!"

**LEMMY CAUTION** **By PETER CHEYNEY**

WELL — IF IT AIN'T THE OLD PERRY ! LET'S HAVE A DRINK !
HOW IS IT THIS TIME, LEMMY ? SOMETHING YOU CAN COUNT ME IN ON ?
ALL IN GOOD TIME, HANGOVER. MEANWHILE — DON'T FORGET THAT I'M PERRY MASON FROM IOWA.
ANYTHING YOU SAY, LEMMY.
THIS IS SURE ONE SWELL DUMP — SAY HANGOVER WHO'S THAT SWEET DISH SITTING AT THE TABLE NEAR THE BAND ?

down the street!

JS: I knew that at one of the US conventions (Dallas) they used Gully Foyle as promotion. Did you know that?

SP: No! Although I do know that in Los Angles or somewhere they had a convention about 5 years back, and one of the sets that John had sent over there in goodwill to a fan was put up for auction and brought $35! Incidently we only paid $80 for the whole 100 sets.

JS: How did the "Jungle King" comic fit into the saga of "Yarmak, The Fearless One"?

SP: Just before I finished doing "Yarmak", the title changed into "Jungle King" with original stories. "Jungle King" then started reprinting previous "Yarmak" stories, picking up at number thirty where "Yarmak" had originally left off. The reprints incidently, were in no order whatsoever. Altogether there were 32 original stories, a lot of them are very poorly inked as you probably know.

JS: Who did the inking on them?

SP: I had three people, all friends of mine--Paul Wheelahan and the Ashely brothers (Frank and Jay).

JS: I know Paul Wheelahan mainly from his work on The Panther and The Raven.

SP: Paul works for the same company as myself--he writes Western novels now. He's been doing that for about ten years now. He writes the novels and I do the covers.

JS: You don't sign your covers, do you?

SP: No, I never sign them--that's against the policy of the company. The idea being that if you do sign them people will know who you are--then they can contact you and the company might lose you.

JS: What are some of the other early strips you did?

SP: Universal Conquest--that was a good one for the period. It was a bit before "Silver Starr". I didn't know anything about publishing in those days, so I decided to do the thing in full color. I later learned that Universal Conquest was unpublishable because I had not done the color on overlay sheets. So I kept the pages all these years up until 2 or 3 years ago when I happened to mention it to Al Williamson in one of my letters. Sometime later Al asked if I could send it over to him and he would try to fine a publisher, and so he did. As far as I'm concerned, Al is the finest artist in the business and his kindness equals his talent.

JS: Do you know who's going to publish it?

SP: Doug Murray will publish it, but alas I don't know when. I've had this thing in my files for 30 odd years and now at last I can look forward to seeing it published in the near future. There are some very good panels in Universal Conquest and some of the drawing is so good that I doubt that I could equal it today.

JS: How many pages is the strip?

SP: The whole thing is about 60 pages and in full color. It's just a matter of time now. It'll be interesting to see just how well it comes out.

JS: What about some of your other early work.

SP: I also did "Captain Justice"...No, not the same one as Monty Wedd's--in fact, I'm damn sure he pinched the name as we were very early in with it. Our Capt. Justice was a swashbuckler-Barbary Coast style; in short, a pirate. Also Adrian Allis-Adventure. We were fascinated, like everyone else at that time, by The Phantom and we came up with this strip which let to other ideas--The Spector and Captain Fury. We liked Jungle Jim and this strip led to the creation of Jim Atlas. But they were all drawn after the first few years of selling my first strip--Anthony Fury. Then came Silver Starr and the happiest three years of my life. Yarmak was next and after this I had a few attempts at dailies. Mr. Midnight and Lemmy Caution (on which Reg collaborated), for the Press Feature Service, but these stories were unsuccessful. They made a sale for the Lemmy Caution story to the French newspapers but it wasn't enough to pay the bills--so they had to drop it.

JS: Artists in Australia seem to have a hard time getting anything published in America.

SP: That certainly seems to be the case. John Dixon's not had much good fortune in the US.

JS: Years ago, we had an industry that could hold its own anywhere in the world.

SP: Indeed we did--but I doubt that any of us ever thought of it quite that way. We were all very young, not much interested in the Industry's history, only enjoying every minute of it and hoping that it would last forever.

JS: Do you think that comic strips will ever pay well enough to become commercially viable and produce great works of art?

SP: As a young man I had an overpowering desire to become a great artist, and this desire becomes more urgent with the passing of time. Very few artists ever produce great art commercially. The reasons for this are that the rewards for art in Australia and elsewhere are mostly low and the deadlines constant. In my case I work 2 days to produce one cover and the reward is $A60. If I take three days or even a week, it will still be $60. For this reason, the struggle an artist has to reach perfection in his work becomes frustrated into a struggle to make money to survive.

JS: When you drew Gully Foyle, how did you plan the pages out?

SP: My brother Reg did most of the planning. We have a great empathy--he seems to know just how much space is needed and an uncanny ability to percieve what I will do with it. On some pages I really only drew three out of the 5 or 6 panels. The drawing of Gully Foyle in the light pattern (GF page 7) is the negative of the original that you see. This was pasted onto the photograph and some work was done to it, mainly with white ink, to get the effect a little more strongly than we had it originally and also the second picture was done in the same way. The space ships were drawn on seperate paper, trimmed and pasted down and a little more work was done to make it appear more natural. But you've got to have this mechanical type finish for an SF strip.

JS: What would be your own favorite strip?

SP: Yarmak, I never really got around to putting any really fine work into it but I had a lot of fun.

JS: A few years ago you did some work for D.C. and Western Pub. in America (Midnight Witching Hour #14 and Boris Karloff Tales of Mystery #33), —have you ever thought of doing any more?

**Stan holding Gully Foyle Page**

AS LOMA TELLS HIM THAT KING LON AND HIS PEOPLE WON'T LIVE ON ANOTHER ISLAND BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THAT THE GODS WANT THEM TO STAY ON MACOONA ISLE, ANTHONY SHAKES HIS HEAD IN DISGUST . . .
"THAT'S FOOLISH, BARBARIAN SUPERSTITION!" THE YOUNG ADVENTURER SNAPS. "SURELY YOU DON'T BELIEVE IN THAT, LOMA?"

**Panel from Anthony Fury**

SP: Not unless I could get $100 a page, so there is not much hope is there? You see there is quite a lot of difficulty in working with editors at long distance. The trouble is particularly with manuscripts. The editors may think they are good but the artist may have alternative ideas and since they don't approve with tampering, one must press on with the job. What I would like to do is get some regular paperback cover work from America and in the short space of a year we could pull up our ties and get over there and then I could really become involved in comics. Also the exchange rate works against you when you receive a check from America ($100 US becomes approx $67). It would be great to meet Al and Arlene Williamson. They are two of the best people I know. I must tell you a little story John. Two or Three years ago Al sent an eight page SF comic script for me to do for some publisher in New York. I finished the work in a month or so and parceled it back. Al's personal check for $400 arrived a fortnight later. In the following months I asked Al many times for a publishing date, but his letter never conveyed an answer. It must have been a year later that he finally admitted that the publisher (Berni Wrightson) had gone out of business and that he had payed for the comic out of his own pocket, rather than disappoint me. I was not to worry because he was glad to have the comic himself. One of these days he will find a spot for it and anything over $400 that he gets for it is mine. I think that will give you some idea of Al's character.

JS: How did you come to meet Al Williamson?

SP: I didn't, as a matter of fact! (Stan ducked out of the room and appeared a moment later with one of the Nostalgia Press volumes of Flash Gordon). It all started with a Melbourne bloke, Alan Tompkins by name,who did a little fanzine--very beautiful production too. Tompkins was primarily a Burroughs fan but also an admirer of Al Williamson to whom he sent a copy of the zine and this is how Al became aware of me. I had become aware of him through his comic work but had no personal contact with him and then one day--and you won't believe this, it was my birthday, the postman knocks and gives me a book... from America. I opened it and couldn't believe my eyes! Flash Gordon--I hadn't seen some of those pages in 30 years! The covering letter arrived a few days later (which went on to say that Al had seen Stan's work and having had a hand in the Nostalgia Press Flash Gordon books, had sent one over to him).

JS: It's rather incredible the way people refine and develop such style.

SP: That's one of the things about Raymond's art--he really did develop it! In fact he got some of his first inspirations from Gustave Dore--but what he did with it is quite remarkable! I know this for I've seen many Dore plates that Raymond actually had copied in the early days when he was just starting off.

JS: Have you, in any way been influenced by Dore?

SP: I suppose so, these things are always in the mind. You can't be exposed to a thing and not be affected by it. I'll show you some of my early attempts (Stan went out of the room and came back with a folder). Here's some of the things I did when I was a kid.

JS: This looks like an interesting strip, "The Death Pearl", how old would most of these be?

SP: About 30 years.

JS: The Raymond influence certainly shows through!

SP: Yes, even in the beginning, eh? But I did such long figures! I shudder just to look at them!

JS: "Silver Starr" was originally published in the Sydney Sunday Sun?

SP: Oh yes! That was a really big double page spread. You never saw it in its original form did you? (Stan went out and came back with a gigantic color proof of the first page of Silver Starr). They cut down the size a few times of course.

JS: How long did "Silver Starr" go for?

SP: Two years (November 24, 1946 - November 14, 1948), I resigned because they cut it down to such a squibby little size. It was fairly young to resign, only 22! I couldn't get any feeling out of it anymore. It was reduced to half the size of an average comic book page--trying to cram all those pictures into such a small space. They had newspaper difficulties in those days due to the war. I had to get out of it. I was putting just as much work into it but a lot of it was being lost as the reduction was too great. I did some of it four up. It's astonishing that it came out at all!

JS: You did all your own inking?

SP: Oh yes, on "Silver Starr" everything. The inking was done using a pen, I hadn't yet begun to use a brush. The nib of the mapping pen was filed down.

JS: When coloring, did you make a tracing?

SP: No, they used to get a bromide and I'd color that.

JS: What did you do the coloring with? Watercolor?

SP: Transparent inks. But I was disappointed! I used to love to put the ink straight onto the original drawing. It was very difficult to get a nice even texture on the bromide paper. It was so slippery, oily

**Silver Starr**

and greasy. But still; they had a code for the colors so what I really wanted they could achieve. They were quite good about that.

JS: What do you think of comics today?

SP: I think they've deteriorated in an incredible way! It's a downslide. Not because of a lack of talent around, there's more competent people today than ever, but they just don't get the breaks anymore.

JS: What kind of comics would you like to see?

SP: Really great comics--comics that an artist can be proud of; putting any degree of time into and really be satisfied with what he's achieving. I don't think I'll ever see that.

JS: Getting away from the "production line" idea?

SP: Fill ins and the rest of it. "Let's get the page done!" Do one good picture and the rest just fill out because that is the way that it has to be done. The money's not there--and neither is the interest; you've got to have the interest.

JS: Did you know many of the other comic book artists of the period?

SP: Oh yes, John Dixon--I knew John quite well, Keith Chatto, Hart Amos and Phil Belbin of course.

JS: Who else did you admire when you were first starting off?

SP: Well, apart from Action and Adventure comics, the big interest was Raymond, Foster and Hogarth.

JS: What Hogarth did you see?

SP: Most of the Tarzan. But I always thought of him as third in the line. Raymond first, Foster second and then Hogarth, but now Al Williamson is number one.

JS: Can you tell me anything about the publishers of the day?

SP: Well, actually I was never on any personal relationships with them--you can imagine all you'd be interested in would be getting your money and seeing when the publication date was. You'd take your pages in and get away as fast as possible.

JS: None of them ever returned work to you?

SP: I've never had anything returned to me ever. I've asked a few times, but it's just not done.

JS: As I've said before, I can't get over the similarity between your own work and that of Alex Raymond's.

SP: Well, that was by design, you know about that. I wanted to be like Alex but I think in Gully Foyle I was getting away from that.

JS: How many different comic strips do you think you did altogether?

SP: Roughly I'd say about 15.

JS: What would be the longest running?

SP: I think it might be "Yarmak".

JS: What would be the shortest?

SP: Anthony Fury--it was a one shot of about 40 pages. It sold for 4½d. I never could understand why the publisher didn't charge 6d and pay me a little more for it.

JS: Were all the other comics 6d at the time?

SP: All of them, every one! Anthony Fury was done for the Telegraph incidently. A subsidiary of theirs--The Shakespeare Head Press published it.

JS: Did you ever try to syndicate any newspaper strips in that earlier period?

SP: There were dailies, lot's of interest was shown. The problem was that in the days that I did them they had no syndication in Australia whatsoever. You'll remember that "Silver Starr" appeared in the one paper for two years and for this reason one newspaper couldn't pay enough money. All they wanted to pay in those days was $20, which wasn't very much, so you were really better off doing comic pages--you could get 7 or 8 a comic page. I did anyway. I've been told that I got more than anybody in those times!

SUDDENLY, SEVERAL WALL-BRACKETED CANDLES ARE AFLAME... THE JUNGLE KING'S BLOOD FREEZES AS HE PEERS INTO THE FLICKERING SHADOWS...
THIS CHAMBER~ IS FILLED WITH SERPENTS!

**Yarmak**

JS: Have you ever thought of doing anything since Gully Foyle in the way of a newspaper strip?

SP: No, that one captivates all of my imagination because there's so much I could do with it. In fact, if I do it again, I'm going to give it an entirely different slant and I'll do it right from the beginning once more.

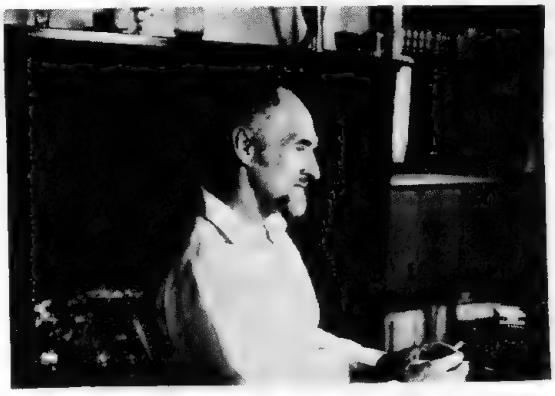
JS: So if you do do this, there will have virtually been three series. The first, the redoing and the third It'd be great if you do all 200 pages! Do you still have the original art?

SP: Reg, has the original art. I didn't like to keep it as I lose interest in things once I've done them and I'm always looking forward to the next job.

JS: What is your advice to aspiring artists?

SP: You really want to know that? It's "don't!" Keep and develop it as a private hobby unless you are lucky enough to have a private income!

*Note...
I'd like to thank Hugh O'Kennon for making available some of the extra illustrations used in this article.
MLG.



Alfred Bester's

# GULLY FOYLE

4

by Reginald & Stanley Pitt

MAROONED ABOARD THE WAR-WRECKED SS NOMAD FOR ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY DAYS, GULLY FOYLE AT LAST SAW SOME RAY OF HOPE MOVING AMONG THE IMMOBILE VAST STAR CLUSTER OF SPACE.

SOMETHIN'S MOVIN' OUT THERE! IS IT - IS IT -

AS THE APPROACHING SHIP DREW NEARER, GULLY FOYLE WENT HURTLING TOWARDS NOMAD'S BRIDGE TO SEND SIGNALS. BUT AT THE TOP OF THE COMPANIONWAY STAIRS, HE RESTRAINED HIMSELF. HE COULD NOT REMAIN CONSCIOUS FOR MORE THAN A FEW MORE MOMENTS WITHOUT REPLACING THE STALE AIR IN HIS SPACESUIT. ~~HE GAVE THE ONCOMING SHIP A PLEADING LOOK, THEN TURNED TO RETURN TO HIS LOCKER.~~

HE SWOOPED DOWN TO THE L... SHAKINGLY PUMPED HIS SU... THEN SHOT BACK TO THE B...

THERE'S LADY LU... LIG...

THE STRANGER SIGHTED HIM:

A DISTRESS SIGNAL, PRINCESS. ~ SHALL WE RESPOND?

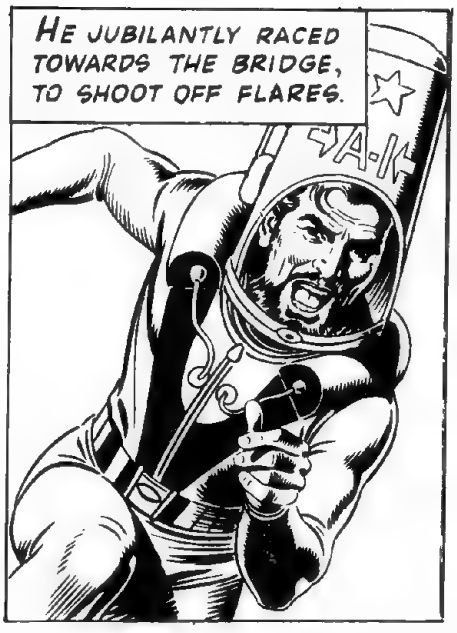
ANYTHING TO RELIEVE THE BOREDOM, CAPTAIN...

WHO KNOWS ~ MY LONG-AWAITED PRINCE CHARMING MIGHT BE ABOARD!

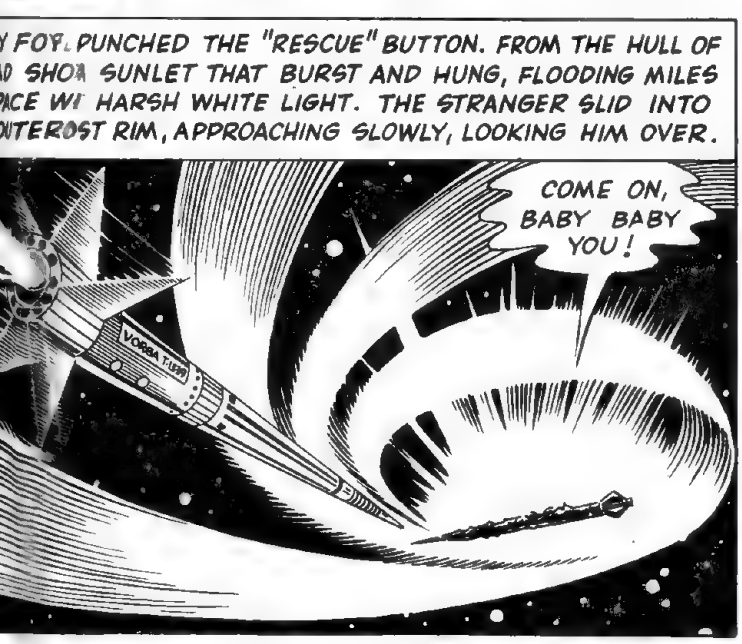
STANLEY PITT

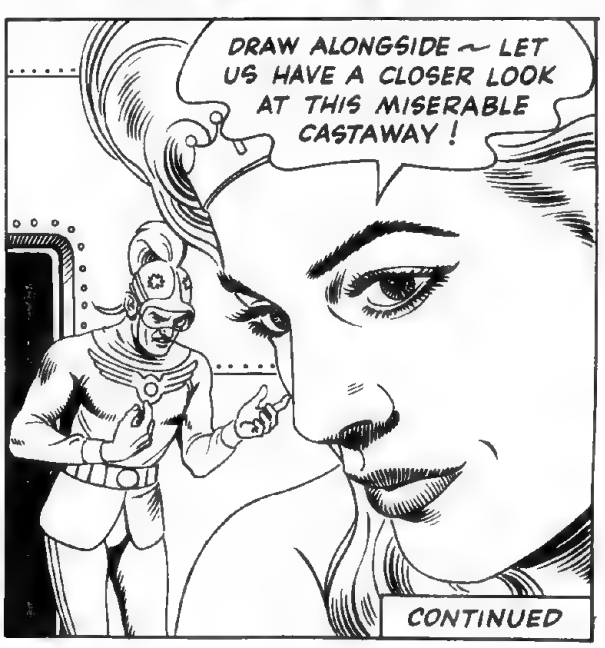
GULL... NOMA... OF SP... THE ...

THE SPACESHIP WAS BEARING DOWN ON HIM VERY SLOWLY ~ FOR A MOMENT, GULLY FOYLE'S HEART CONSTRICTED; THE SHIP WAS BEHAVING SO CAUTIOUSLY THAT HE FEARED IT WAS AN ENEMY VESSEL FROM THE OUTER SATELLITES. BUT THEN HE REALISED THAT THE O.S. NAVY, HAVING ALREADY DEALT THE DEATH BLOW TO NOMAD, WAS UNLIKELY TO RETURN TO RESCUE SURVIVORS, IF ANY.



HE PRESSED THE "DISTRESS" BUTTON. WHITE RADIANCE BLINDED HIM AS THE SIGNAL WENT OFF IN THREE TRIPLE BURSTS ~ NINE PRAYERS FOR HELP...
SEE ME! SEE ME! SEE ME!
Distress
Rescue

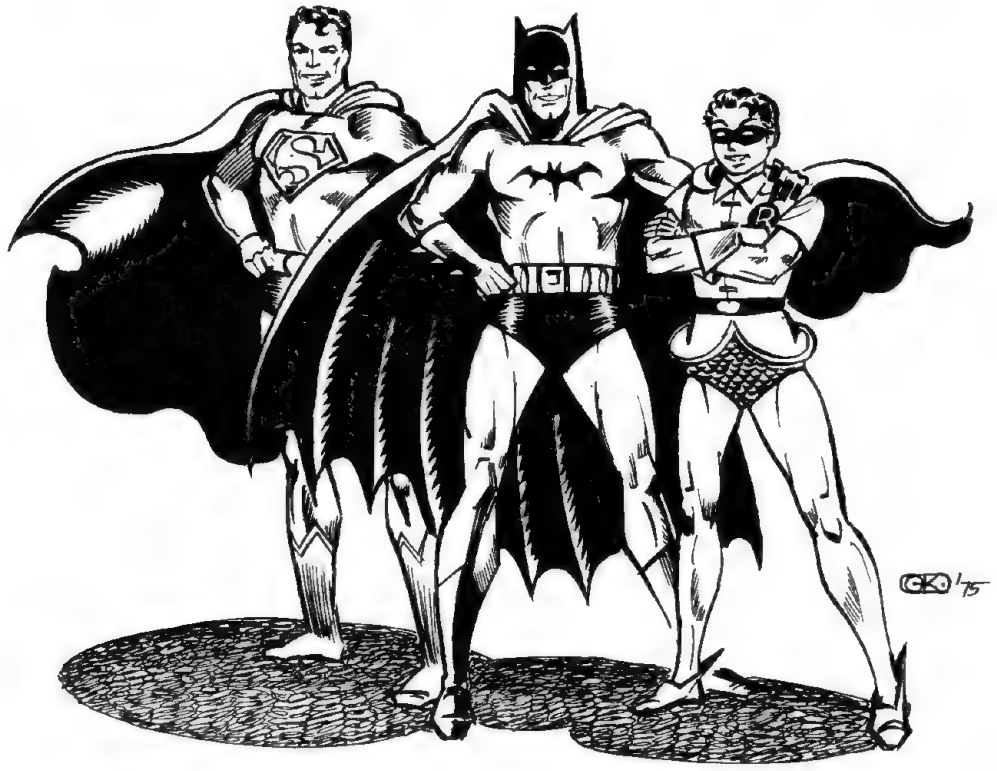

Y FOYLE PUNCHED THE "RESCUE" BUTTON. FROM THE HULL OF
D SHOT A SUNLET THAT BURST AND HUNG, FLOODING MILES
PACE WI HARSH WHITE LIGHT. THE STRANGER SLID INTO
OUTEROST RIM, APPROACHING SLOWLY, LOOKING HIM OVER.
COME ON, BABY BABY YOU!
VOODOO TYPE



fujitake '75

**INTERVIEW:**

# DICK SPRANG



BY

## JOHN L. GARCIA & BOB COSGROVE

Back in the "GOLDEN AGE" of comics, when it became obvious that public demand for BATMAN and ROBIN exceeded the supply of art that any one man could churn out in a single month, National Periodicals began hiring good artists who could emulate Bob Kane's style. One of the best, and the most durable, was DICK SPRANG.

Sprang's gradual rise in the art world was fairly typical. Born in Fremont, Ohio, a little town near Lake Erie, he began as a sign painter at age fifteen, doing billboards, street banners for fairs, and lobby posters for Fremont's two movie houses.

Upon graduating from high school he joined the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, working in the art department of the Toledo News-Bee. There he learned layout, advertising art, editorial cartooning, photolayout, composition, printing problems, and most of all, the importance of meeting deadlines. In an age when people relied mainly on newspapers, rather than electronic media, beating a rival paper's extra on the Will Rogers/Wiley Post crash by thirty minutes could mean a difference of thousands of dollars in street sales. Sprang doubled as photographer's assistant, and on big stories, served as a leg man, taking notes and phoning in story details for rewrite.

Although he was making a good salary, particularly by depression standards, Sprang wanted a bigger challenge. He quit his job, prepared some samples, and made the rounds of the New York publishers, hoping to illustrate pulp stories. "The first publisher I caught on with was Street and Smith," he recalls. "And then the Thrilling Group (also know as Standard Publications and Better Publications). When I knew them in the mid and late thirties, they published a string of twenty-four pulps. I think I free-lanced for every pulp house in New York at one time or another."

Sprang worked mostly on Western stories, doing dry-brush illustrations. He felt a strong affinity for the West, and knew quite a bit about equipment, horse gear, and other technical details. Reading the stories was a revelation. "Hell," Sprang decided, "I can write these damn stories as good as these guys can." So he tried it, and sold twenty-seven of them. During this period Sprang also did occasional illustrations for The Shadow pulps.

Inevitably, Sprang met other artists, and formed "a sort of two-bit agency," operating out of a little loft on 42nd Street, just off Fifth Avenue. In the mid-thirties, many of Sprang's pulp publishers clients entered the comics field, and with them went Sprang, and his two partners, ED KRESSY and NORMAN FALLON. As we pick up the interview, Sprang is talking about his two partners: "Ed was a great layout and composition man; he'd take a page and layout six panels in no time flat. Very rough —just a sketch. Then he'd turn the page over to me, and I'd detail the figures, because I was a figure man and action man. Norm would ink and letter. With this method, we could easily whip out two, three, four pages a day. Of course, we weren't getting anything for them. God knows what we got per page. I forget. And of course, the stories were God-awful. The publishers

would pick up a bunch of old drunk, pulp-writers, aspiring screen-writers, or radio script writers who were down on their uppers, and they'd try to master comic book continuity."

C.C. Who did you work for?

D.S. The only comic I definitely recall working on with Ed and Norm was Prize Comics, the Power Nelson and Futureman stories. The cover of Prize #1 looks like our stuff, and if Prize Publications had any other books early on, we probably contributed to them. We also did some Lone Ranger radio scripts and continuity art.

I remember one guy, John Reese, who edited a string of comics, although I can't remember any of the titles. It could have been the Prize Group. Reese was a good guy, low key, an honest young fellow and we did regular work for him. But I could see this wasn't getting us anywhere, so we went mostly into advertising work.

C.C. Why did you come back to comics?

D.S. I got fed up with the long sessions I had to spend with clients, wasting the whole afternoon talking about extraneous matters. And, I wanted to leave New York. I had my eye on Arizona, but in those years, advertising artists had to be in N.Y., L.A., Chicago, or maybe San Francisco. It occured to me that if I could hook on with a big comic publisher, this might allow me to eventually work by mail.

C.C. How did you come to work for National?

D.S. I looked over the successful books, and I liked DC's production very much, particularly Batman and Robin, which Bob Kane was doing.

One point I'd like to make about those days. There were a lot of kids coming up then, and we were all very observant. We read all the syndicated strips, and were all devotees of Alex Raymond, Hal Foster, and Milton Caniff. We would save their stuff and swipe it, imitate them. They were so good, you just couldn't help it. And it was good discipline, because it taught you a lot about how to draw these union suit heroes. As a result, all the books looked as though they were drawn by four or five men. It was like the movies, both then and now. Bullit has a good chase scene, and soon there are five new movies, all with chase scenes.

C.C. More like twenty new movies.

D.S. Yes. Anyway, after copying Alex Raymonds, for training purposes, he began to creep into my work, and this helped prepare me for Batman--not that it ever, at any time, approached Alex Raymond's skill.

So I prepared a sample, working "twice up," just as if it would be reproduced. Rather than do a Batman imitation, which I feared would brand me as a competition, or as a seeker of one particular strip, I did a one-page Terry and the Pirates type story. I managed to drag about everything possible into the one page, because I thought it was good psychology to show I could draw almost anything. I did it in black and white, then overlaid it with color washes, so it appeared as it would in a Sunday supplement or comic book. It was an impressive piece, which got me into see Whitney Ellsworth, executive editor of DC at that time.

C.C. Can you describe your interview with Ellsworth?

D.S. He made a few complimentary remarks about my samples, then asked if I'd like to try Batman for him. I said, "Well great, sure." So he gave me three manuscript pages and said, "See what you can do. I'd like to see these about Thursday, if possible, and I'd like to see them inked; you can forget the lettering--just outline the word balloons." This story had already been published, evidentally drawn by Kane. I didn't have a great file on Batman, and I didn't look up what Kane had done on this story, because that would've defeated Ellsworth's purpose. I interpreted the pages the way I saw them, and brought them in on time. Ellsworth called the treasurer, and paid me for those three pages, pages which he was never going to use. Well--this really impressed me. Then he said, "Okay, I'm going to try you on a story." So he gave me, I believe, a twelve or thirteen page Batman manuscript, written by Cameron.

C.C. Don Cameron?

D.S. He was the son of W.C. Cameron a vice president of the Ford Motor Company who used to speak every Sunday night on the Ford Motor Hour, talking about free enterprise and all that stuff. Well, his son was in New York, writing, and was a fine script writer, to my mind. I went home with his script, which Whit wanted in about fifteen days. This meant I'd have to do about a page a day, inked and lettered--camera ready art. I was scared out of my wits. But I did it, and brought it back. Whit looked at the splash page, then leafed through the whole group, not rapidly, but not slowly, taking in each page, but not scrutinizing every damn line. When he got through, he straightened them up, laid them on the desk, picked up the phone, called the treasurer, and told him to make me out a check. So I said, "Well, that's great Mr. Ellsworth; I thank you very much. But--look, I've been around New York for a few years, and I've free-lanced with about every outfit I can think of, on my level, and I've never submitted anything so lengthly as this without being asked to make a change."

"I don't doubt it a bit," he said. "But if you can keep this up--the way you've interpreted this manuscript --that's all you'll ever have to worry about with us. We have a bunch of young artists, working on salary, and they'll make any minor changes we want. We're not buying an individual panel of artwork, but your interpretation of a script. If we like your interpretation, which we do, on this story, we're not going to bother you with all kinds of little changes. We want you on the line, producing the major stuff."

I was very flattered, but as a matter of fact, I still believe that individual interpretation is the secret of doing a good comic from someone else's script. You simply have to have a feeling, and of course, if it's an established book, you have to study it, and attempt to draw your characters the way other artists draw them. Since I had proved that I could interpret a script, and that I could meet deadlines, I met DC's two most important criteria.

C.C. I gather that Whitney Ellsworth was a good man to work for?

D.S. He had a flair for working with artists and treating them with respect, which was a bit unusual around town. In some houses, the artist was the floor mat. Whit was a great guy, a humorous, non-assuming sort of character, and by the way, an ex-newspaperman. Whit had seen it all, and heard it all, but he was never cynical. He was appreciative. He could be though--hardboiled as all hell, and he could take a lot. He had to, as executive editor. Whitney Ellsworth was the best editorial director for that period in the industry. He and Jack Lieborwitz were able to hold DC together, and later, with Mort Wiesinger's help, and Jack Schiff's they set the industry standard of high quality. Ellsworth felt strongly about artistic integrity and moral integrity. Because his books had a vast distribution, he felt he had this kind of responsibility to his reader, and to the publisher. I liked this in an editor. I think it's necessary.

C.C. Can you describe your working method?

D.S. I have a strong visual sense; after reading the

manuscript once, I'm with it. Afterwards it's a mere guide. Each morning I'd reread the page I was about to do. By then, my subconcious had pretty well set each page's dramatic impact, so I could start right in drawing. I had editorial control over the manuscripts --I could make changes if I saw fit. For example, if a writer had a Custer's Last Stand with 5,000 charging Indians, I could change it to make it drawable, or rewrite it entirely. To be a comic book artist you have to be able to draw anything, from any angle, dramatically. Just as a camera, you probe, as a cinematographer does. You are a probe, searching, in those few hours that you're at that board. And that exploring is the artist's great adventure and reward. Balloons, of course, are always a problem, and interfere. They tend to be a road block, as do captions, but they're necessary for narrative clarity. You've go to place them in the most amenable position, where they'll be easily readable, but won't interfere with the flowing, dramatic artwork. The style of the story, as a whole, as drawing, is the essence of the adventure comic. There's a rhythm, a pace, a tempo, and hopefully, a beautiful imagery that tells the story. If these are good, the result is style, which is to say, elegance within the medium.

C.C. I notice, like Eisner and certain other comic artists, you compare drawing a comic book to shooting a movie.

D.S. The artist is alone, just as the director is alone in the concept of what he is trying to do. The director has help, however - propmen, actors, cameramen, make -up people, costume artists. But you, as comic book artist, must be all these departments. You're the costume artist, the location scout, the casting artist. If you've got five gangsters in one story, are they all going to be the same height? No! One will be skinny, one fat, another medium. This variety is important. The reader may not be aware of it consciously, but subconsciously, it makes sense to him.

Actually, what you're working with in comics is the frozen frame, where you stop action at a dramatic point in the action. That is about as far as you can go on the page. There have been attempts to bring accelerated motion to the page. Hogarth tried to, and his method worked pretty well, but visual tricks can never depict action with the punch inherent in television, or the movies.

C.C. Could studying films help a potential comic book artist?

D.S. Yes. One thing I always liked to use was ceilings. I'm a nut about ceilings. I think they have great compositional value, as you can see in the way Greg Toland composed shots for Orson Wells in Citizen Kane, or in the way Hitchcock used ceilings in Psycho. And then, of course, there's always the wonderful stairwell. You can do anything on the stairs, and it'll always be dramatic. Think of the angles you can shoot from--limitless.

I think any comic book artist could benifit from viewing Griffith's Birth of A Nation - it's hard to beat as a model for depicting almost anything. His compositional use of high ceilings and his door panels, his inventiveness with costumes; that famous cannon close-up where you're looking along the barrel of a cannon and out of the smoke a soldier charges and rams a flag staff down its muzzle--Griffith used the close-up as an exclamation point and cut to it for this purpose only. Comic book artists tend to overlook the true purpose of a close-up, and use it as a cop-out. Sometimes we use it as a rest-stop, a pause, and that's needed.

Another good man to study is Renoir, the painter's son and movie director. In his picture, Rules of the Game, there's a lesson for anyone who wants to learn how to draw a room complicated by its many people. And Eisenstein's Potemkin--a masterpiece of flowing compositional technique--these are all things I would advise any aspiring comic book artist to give an overview.

C.C. What else can you tell them?

D.S. Going back to frozen frame-stop action problems, I noticed in much of the work done while I was active, that so many artists passed up chances to give inamimate objects action, or to suggest action by simple, functional means. For instance, if you have a big truck charging down the highway, and its got a tarp, have the tarp come undone, billowing in the wind above the truck. It doubles the sense of action. This was a trick I liked to use; perhaps it was inspired by the capes on various characters. That way, you pretty much eliminate the need for speed lines.

C.C. After joining DC, what happened to your studio, and work for other companies?

D.S. After beginning Batman, I did no other comic art; I'd promised Whit Ellsworth I'd give DC my exclusive production. However, some of my work for Prize and other books, which had been held for later publication, might well have appeared afterwards.

Upon joining DC, I ended my working association with Kressy and Fallon under our original three-way arrangement. Fallon and I shared a studio during the war years, each working on his own stuff.

Kressy assisted me on some of my first Batman layouts. He hoped to go partners with me, but he could never measure up to the deadline requirements, so I quickly phased him out.

As for short stories, I see that my work appeared in Martin Goodman's pulps well into the 1940's. DC had no objection to my continuing to sell fiction and

articles to anybody I could.

C.C. What was your monthly output?

D.S. It varied according to script supply. I was a fast worker, and often they didn't supply me with enough scripts to keep me busy full time. The average monthly output was at least two twelve or thirteen page stories.

C.C. And obviously, you were eventually able to leave New York?

D.S. I finally cut a deal with DC where I could move to Arizona and do everything by mail. It also happened at that time that my inker Mac MacDonald, who was a great inker, also moved to Arizona, and later Charlie Paris, who lived in Tuscon.

C.C. Did you pick your inkers?

D.S. Strictly an editor's perogative. In fact, I never saw Charlie while he was in Arizona. I would pencil the pages and send them out to New York. They would OK them, then mail them down to Charlie, who'd ink them and send them back. A circuitous arrangement, but a necessary one.

C.C. How were you paid?

D.S. Negotiated page rate, plus bonuses. There was no contract/salary set-up. After I caught on and was familiar with the characters, I could pencil and ink a page a day. Just pencilling, I've done as many as five pages a day. But boy, that's pushing. And that was pushing from personal desire--when I wanted to get away to prospect and explore the mountains and canyons and deserts of the southwest or run the Colorado river. I'm an old river rat and river runner, and that was my paramount interest, not comics, although I always did the very best job I could.

C.C. Aside from your beautifully stylized villains, one of the hallmarks of your work seemed to be giant machines and tricky angle shots.

D.S. By happenstance, DC gave me a few scripts which required a great deal of research. I loved doing research, and always tried to make my drawings as authentic as possible. Some of the stories were set in ancient Rome and ancient Egypt, and after researching them, I came up with page layouts that accomodated the scope and grandeur of the locales. It's dam hard to do anything dramatic around huge temples unless you're able to depict them properly. I got a lot of detail into them--tricky perspectives, aerial shots, worm's eye view--and it wasn't long before they began to feed me that type of script. Jack Schiff, who was my first editor under Whitney, liked that treatment very much. Lou Cameron, and my favorite writer, Bill Finger, would come up with scripts that were obviously tailored to what I like to do. I'm saddened to learn of Finger's death. Although I never knew Finger well, whenever I received one of his scripts, it was a delight to have in my hands. I knew I'd have a good story, told so the artist could translate it graphically. Finger had the artist's eye, great literary inventiveness, and the ability to write.

As for the angle scenes, one thing I always enjoyed was doing a big city deal, where Batman and Robin were stalking the rooftops. This gave me a chance to try some tremendous perspective shots--three-point perspective and problems like that. A thorough knowledge of creative perspective opens many otherwise hidden trails to successful script interpretation.

C.C. Who amongst your conterporaries in the field influenced you?

D.S. I admired Kirby's work very much. I've always been envious of it. It's a very forceful, direct style--his swiftness, his slashing action, influenced me, in that I always strived for it, within the limitations of the Batman and Robin figures as DC wanted them at the time. Right through the thirties, forties, and early sixties, they didn't want any heavy shadows on any of these characters unless the actual lighting called for it - night, dungeon scenes, things like that.

C.C. That seems like an odd policy for a creature of the night--

D.S. Liebowitz told us to cut out the blacks because we were doubling the black ink bills.

C.C. Talk about economizing!

D.S. Today, I notice, they are going in the other direction. I wasn't able to really express myself in my own style as I would have liked to.

C.C. Do you think you would have been a better cartoonist if you hadn't been obliged to follow the work of Bob Kane?

D.S. I think I would have developed my own style. I don't know what it'd have been. I think I'd have insisted on more control over the color, if I'd been my own man. This was always a pain in the neck--the color you'd get sometimes. As Mac MacDonald said one time about original pages:
"You know, nothing looks as beautiful as this stuff, on a piece of kid paper, beautifully inked, beautifully drawn, and then you see the goddam thing printed on one of these lousy comic pages, with crummy color, and lousy registration, it just looks like pure junk. It makes you sick."

That's more or less true, and was especially so during the war days, when some of the publishers were stuck with incredibly poor paper made from-God knows what they made it from.

C.C. Getting back to influences, who else did you like?

D.S. This guy who did the Westerns, who's now the publisher of DC --

C.C. Carmine Infantino?

D.S. Yes. His work in DC's Western books I admired tremendously. And Wayne Boring was the main Superman artist around that time, wasn't he? Well, I think he did very fine work. Of course, outside the comic book field, I continued to admire Alex Raymond, Milt Caniff, and Austin Briggs, who could really draw dramatically and move continuity forcefully.

C.C. What did you think of Bob Kane?

D.S. Well, I only met him once. I've no thoughts about him as a person. His early work--not his very earliest, not Batman #1, but shortly thereafter--was absolutely superb. I think his concept of Batman, with the use of the cape, and the huge, bat-like shadow, really did depict the bat-like menace, the man whose mere silhouette against a skyscraper strikes fear into

the hearts of criminals, and all that malarkey. Kane did an excellent job in a certain time period. I thought he was unbeatable, and I copied him straight-out. But then it seemed as if his work took a turn for the worse. I don't know why. I never discussed it with Kane, or anyone else.

C.C. Did you ever get sick of working on Batman and Robin?

D.S. Yes. During all the years I worked on them, there were periods of utter fatigue, when I got tired of the same characters and stories, and wondered why the hell I was there, but on the whole I enjoyed dramatic presentation and I had an affection for the characters. I always liked drawing the Penguin very much, and I liked the Joker. But I'm an utter realist; I knew what I was doing was a way of making a living in a particular place and time.

C.C. Would you have liked to have done other characters?

D.S. I would have enjoyed a good Western, perhaps a Western railroad strip. In fact, I have in my files four or five pretty-well-worked-out, original strips. I've never peddled them, and never will, because I want nothing more to do with that endless, all-day art, and deadlines.

C.C. But you did do some non-Batman work---

D.S. Yes, quite a few Real Fact stories, and, I think, a couple of Westerns. I did many covers. When I was handling all the lead story art for World's Finest Comics I was doing quite a few covers. Of course, it's a little difficult to do covers by mail, but when I was in N.Y., I was doing covers a lot of the time, and not always for my own stories.

C.C. How did you start working on the World's Finest assignment?

D.S. I believe it was Mort Weisinger's idea. Mort was an old friend of mine, and the Superman editor. He'd also done some Batman work in the early days at DC I guess. One day I walked into the editorial office, and Mort, being my friend, said "Do me a World's Finest story with Batman and Robin in it." I did, and it just developed into a regular thing.

C.C. Tell us about Weisinger.

D.S. After I went to work at DC, he was probably the best friend I had in New York. We admired each other. I admired his ability to plot, especially since I wrote myself, on the side. Where I found the actual writing easy, Mort was just the opposite. He could plot, but he was hesitant to write commercial fiction. Of course, he was a wonderful article writer, and

**DICK SPRANG**

now, he has written fiction, and a best selling novel. Mort was a dynamic personality, a magnetic man, but he picked his friends carefully. If he disliked you, there was no mistaking it. If he did like you, he was like the most gracious of Spanish people. His home was absolutely yours; anything he had was yours; he'd do anything for you. And he praised you. If he introduced you to a stranger, he'd go into a long recitation about what you did, and the quality of your work. Somehow you weren't embarassed, because Mort meant it. I liked him very, very much. I admired his capacity as a story editor, and his great creativity. He was a terrific springboard man, who would farm out ideas to the various writers. He helped many writers and artists gain lasting success -- Bill Mauldin among them.

C.C. Jack Schiff was your other editor---

D.S. He was a quiet man with a slow sense of humor. You could kid him and sometimes he wouldn't quite catch it. And I loved to kid him. We got along splendidly. Jack was a superb copy editor, a grammarian from the word go. He could take an involved sentence of fifteen words, and reduce it to six words that were bracing and direct, that advanced the action and built character. Jack never asked me to do anything without exhibiting respect for the artists problems. I felt solid pleasure in doing my damndest to fulfill his requests over all the years. I don't know where he is today. If anyone does know, I wish they'd let me know.

C.C. Did you ever get any of your art back?

D.S. I never requested any, except for one twelve page story which I still have, a Three Musketeers story that appeared in Batman #32 (Dec. '45 - Jan. '46). I did the whole book, including the cover, which featured the Three Musketeers story.

C.C. The whole book?

D.S. Yes - it's hard to judge an artist's monthly output of those years simply by looking at the books. DC would often stockpile work and then release books with four of my stories, or four Robinson stories, or whatever.

C.C. In all the years you toiled away anonymously on Batman and Robin, were you ever resentful that your work was signed "Bob Kane," and that you never received any credit for your stories?

D.S. Nope. The only place where I wanted to see my name was on the check. But there is an interesting story related to that. I was a guest at a house party of Mort Weisinger's, and one of the men there was Leo

Margolies, on of the great pulp editors, to whom I'd sold fiction and art before joining DC. He worked for Ned Pines' group, and was a very kind man, and a very frank one.

We were at the dinner table with other men and their wives. All the men were connected with publishing--comic book guys, other editors, a Collier's writer, some of the pulp stand-bys--everyone a well known name. When Leo found out what I was doing--comics--he gave me a hell of a bawling out, right in front of Mort and the other guests. Leo said, "Dick, you're ghosting this strip and your name isn't on it! You know what's going to happen to you? In twenty years you'll be a nobody! Nobody will know who the hell you are or what you did!"

Mort got all excited, very nervous. He said, "Dick's completely satisfied, Leo, completely satisfied. We know what he's doing, everybody in the business knows what he's doing, you know," and so on.

Leo said, "Mort, shut-up! I bought your science fiction when you were a sixteen-year-old kid. But you have a name because you're publishing articles under your own name. What's Sprang doing? His name's nowhere." Mort got more and more excited, afraid I'd quit right there and then and go into some field of art where my name would appear. It never happened. But bless his heart, Leo was more or less correct. But no one could have cared less then I.

C.C. In all, then, you were happy with National?

D.S. Most happy. Whit kept his promise. I never had to make a change in my work, the entire time I was in Arizona. There were a few changes made in New York, and occasionally I would start going down some ablational line. Then Jack Schiff would write me a short memo saying, "Watch Robin's head; it's getting a little too big." - something of that nature. Then I'd get all uptight and go searching through the books to see, and sure enough, he was right. That was the only trouble I had, which was no trouble at all. My relationship with DC was pure heaven, absolutely no problems. I had the freedom that was my original goal. I feel very fortunate, and I'm very loyal to the DC of that era, and to all those men. It was kind of a worry at first, since I was three thousand miles away, and there were better artists walking in their door, every week, with damn good samples. They could have hired one of those guys and canned me. But they never did, which shows that DC returned the loyalty they received from me.

I'll tell you--I was always a loner. I never associated with the other comic book artists. It wasn't by choice; it was just that I didn't run into many of them out here in Arizona. I suppose that around that editorial office there were all kinds of abrasive confrontations and incidents, bruised egos, and people fired. Some artists might have legitimately thought that DC was the worst outfit in the world. And perhaps it was, to them. But not to me.

C.C. To close the interview, could you tell us about your non-comic work?

D.S. I enjoy lettering and love the old, old, fancy typefaces. I have quite a collection of them, actual typefronts. Now and then I do a brochure job for an outfit I like. I also hope to do some documentary work on the Civil War and the Pioneer West. I want to get a little deeper into the cowpuncher, the railroader, the miner, the sod-buster. It'll be highly realistic and humanistic.

C.C. Thank you very much, Dick; it's been a pleasure.

Art for this aritcle by: Dennis Fujitake, Gary Kato, and Dave Hunt.

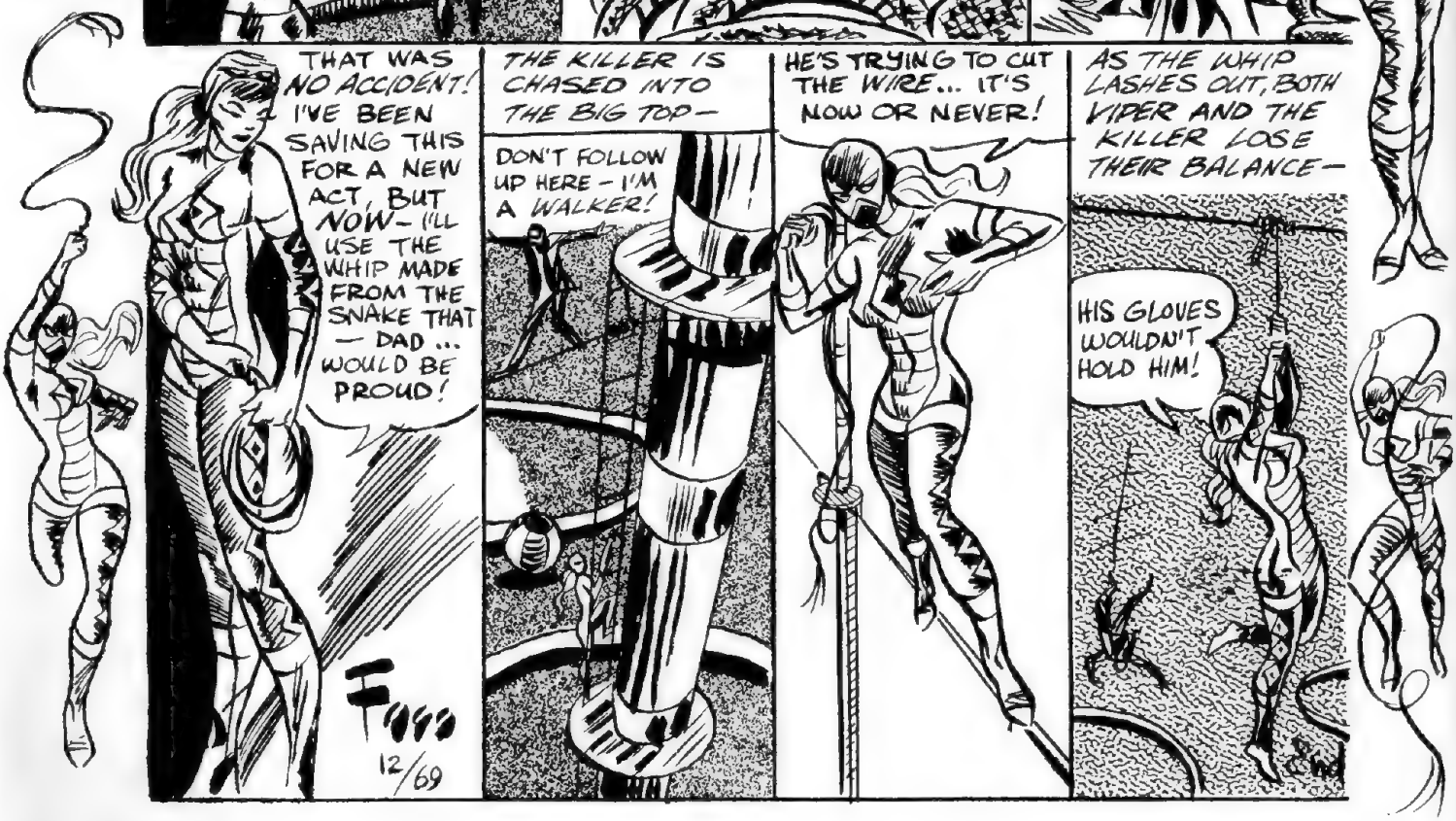
All characters shown in this article are © National Per. Pub. 1976.

# FANDOM'S Finest

## The Viper

from the ORIGIN -1962- Created, written, & illustrated by Ron Foss

I WISH YOU'D GIVE UP THIS LIFE AND GO TO COLLEGE! A TRAVELING BIG TOP ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE!!
MOM, WE'VE BEEN THRU THIS AGAIN AND AGAIN- IT'S WHAT DAD WANTED, REMEMBER? BESIDES, I'VE "GOT SAWDUST IN MY VEINS!"
Hendrix
Viper
LADEEZ AN' GEN-TUL-MEN... IN THE CENTER RING, THE HENDRIX SNAKES, FEATURING NADEEN!
THEY'RE BOTH IN THE BIG TOP, SO I'LL HAVE TIME TO RIG THE COBRA TO BITE THE FIRST ONE TO HANDLE IT! WHOEVER IT IS, THE OTHER WILL COME TO ME FOR CONSOLANCE, AND I'LL WIND UP WITH CONTROLING INTEREST OF THE CIRCUS!!
HISSSS
AIIEEE!!
MOM! GOT TO GET ANTIDOTE BEFORE... LIKE DAD!!


THAT WAS NO ACCIDENT! I'VE BEEN SAVING THIS FOR A NEW ACT, BUT NOW- I'LL USE THE WHIP MADE FROM THE SNAKE THAT — DAD ... WOULD BE PROUD!
THE KILLER IS CHASED INTO THE BIG TOP—
DON'T FOLLOW UP HERE - I'M A WALKER!
HE'S TRYING TO CUT THE WIRE... IT'S NOW OR NEVER!
AS THE WHIP LASHES OUT, BOTH VIPER AND THE KILLER LOSE THEIR BALANCE—
HIS GLOVES WOULDN'T HOLD HIM!
Foss
12/69

DITKO'S "H." SERIES

# THE SCREAMER

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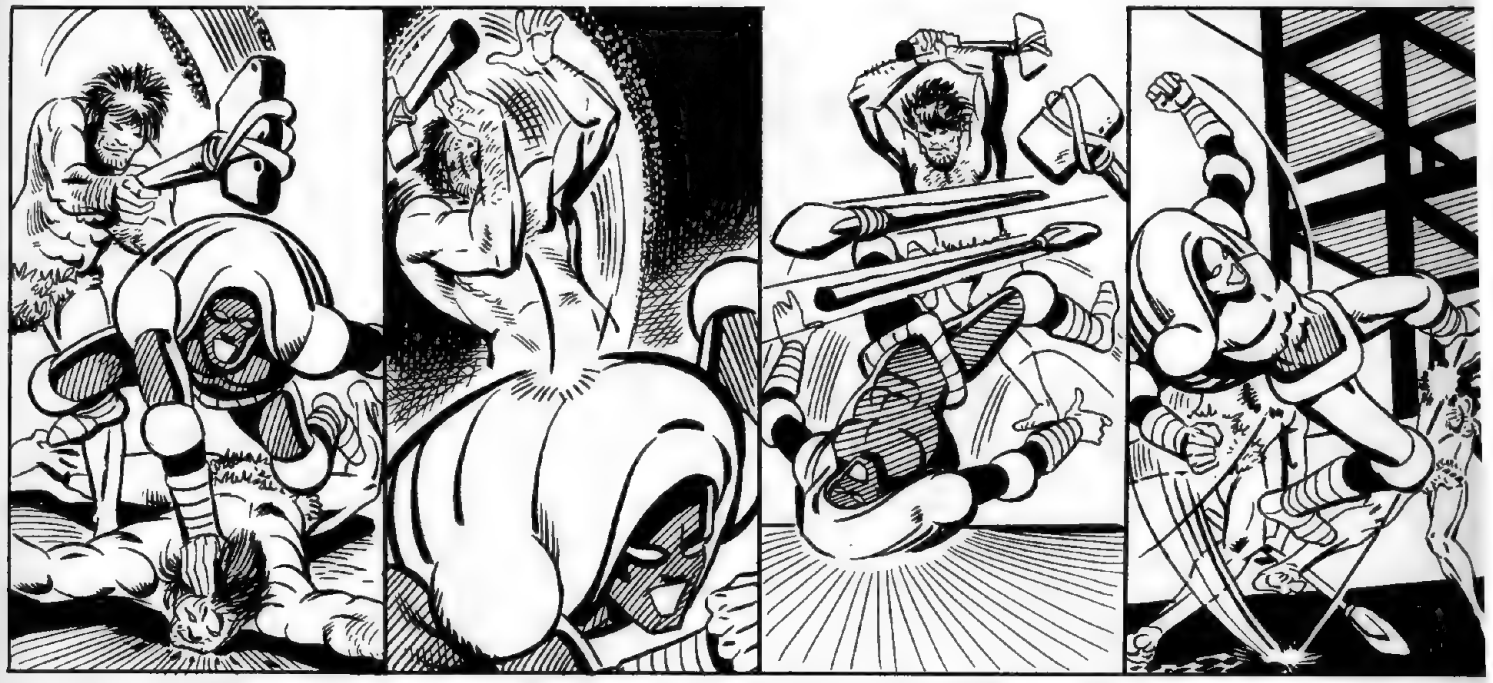
OFF! WE WERE HERE FIRST! ALL EARTH BELONGS TO US! EVERYONE ELSE GET OFF!
STOP! EVERYONE MUST STOP MOVING FORWARD! NO MORE PROGRESS! IT'S DESTROYING US ALL!

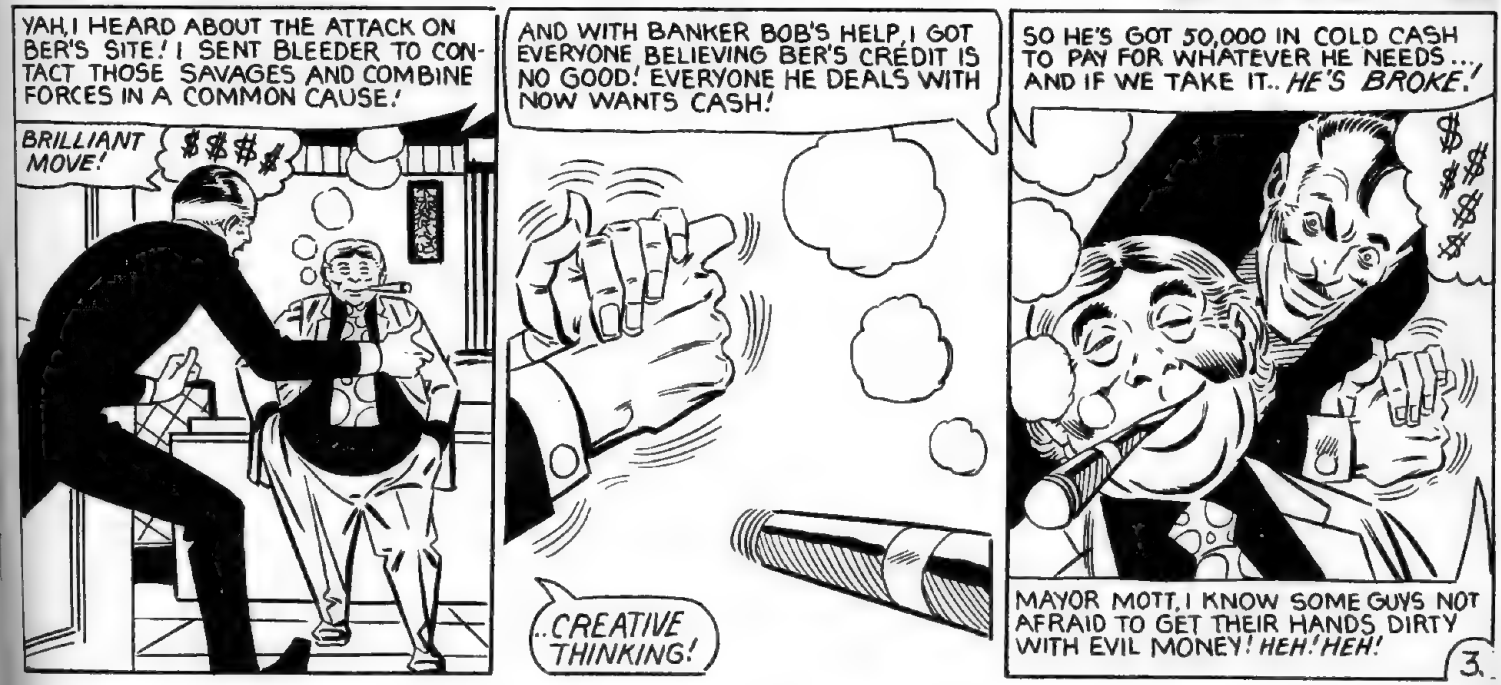
THEY WOUND THE SACRED SKIN OF HOLY GOD NATURE, DEFILE HER NOBLE BEAUTY, DISFIGURE HER DIVINE FORM WITH STRUCTURES AND KILL HER PRECIOUS CREATIONS!.. LOOK!.. SOB!
BER FACTORY SITE

ANOTHER DEAD BUG! SOB! SOON ALL WILL BE EXTINCT! SOB! WE ARE NATURE GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE! WE MUST RETURN NATURE TO HER HOLY PRIMITIVE STATE! NO ONE MUST EVER BE ALOWED TO CHANGE HER!
THE VILLIAN IS THE DEVIL GOD PROGRESS! HE AND HIS EVIL FOLLOWERS MUST BE DESTROYED!

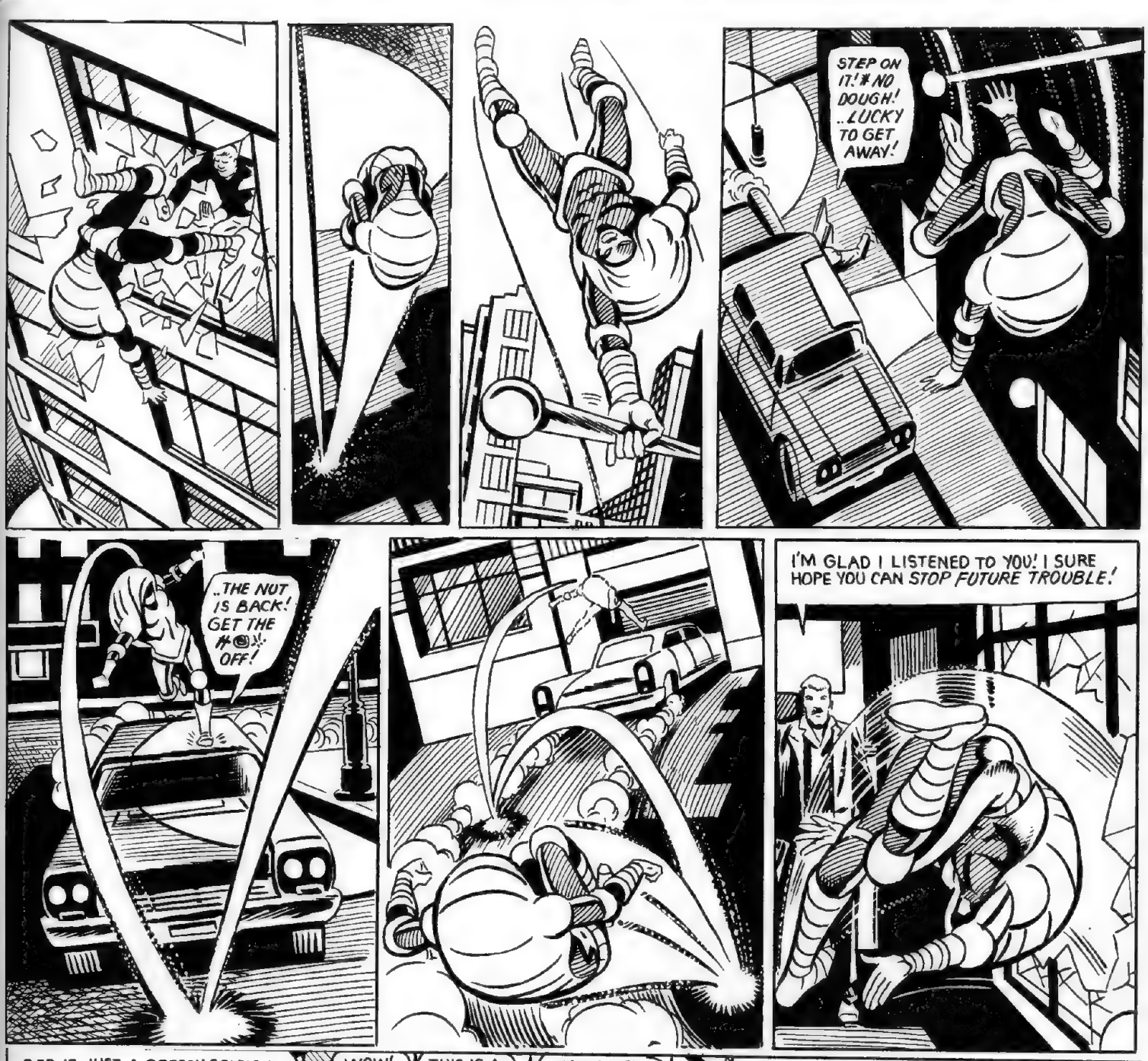
WE WILL RETURN *NATURE* TO HER PRIMITIVE GLORY WHERE NOTHING CHANGES, POLLUTES OR DEFILES *HER* HOLY STATE!
ONLY WE BELONG HERE ONLY OUR WAY OF LIFE IS GOOD! ALL WHO SEEK PROGRESS WILL BE DRIVEN OFF EARTH OR BE DESTROYED!
MAYOR, I HELPED YOU GET ELECTED! THAT CITY LAND BER GOT YOU PROMISED TO SELL ME.. *CHEAP!*
$!
*© BER LEGALLY OUTFOXED ME BUT THERE'S *ILLEGAL* WAYS! YOU'LL GET THAT LAND YET AND I'LL GET MY KICKBACK! WE'LL BOTH EARN A PROFIT!
HIS FACTORY WILL NEVER GET BUILT! I STIRRED UP A PROBLEM AGAINST HIM.. *BLEEDER*, THE *NATURE PLEADER!*
..A STROKE OF *GENUIS!* BLEEDER *REALLY BELIEVES* WHAT HE SAYS!
STOP BER
PROGRESS IS UNNATURAL UNCIVILIZED INHUMAN, UNATTRACTIVE.. AN EYE SORE!
NO MORE BUILDING, PROGRESS, POLLUTION! ..BACK TO PRIMITIVE LIVING!
NATURE IS CIVILIZATION! PROGRESS IS BARBAIRISM. THE CAVE NOT THE SKYSCRAPER.
NATURE IS *LIFE!* PROGRESS IS *DEATH!*
EVIL MEN WANT PROGRESS.. GOOD SANE MEN WANT TO LEAVE ALL AS IT IS.
HUMAN LIFE DEPENDS ON STOPPING PROGRESS AND GOING BACK TO THE SANE, HEALTHY, GOOD OLD CARE FREE DAYS BEFORE SCIENCE AND PROGRESS!
NO MORE FACTO BER
ACT TO STOP PROGRESS
AAARRGHH! EVIL PROGRESS KILLS *NATURE*, WE KILL *KILLERS!*
HEY!? WHO.. WHAT ARE THEY?!
EEIYIEOAWEEOIWEIIAHIEEAIEA
CRAZY CRY!? W..WHO?
..??!
2.



..FLEE, DEMON IS TOO POWERFUL..TOO CUNNING!
BUT WE NOT GIVE UP! EARTH IS RIGHTFULLY OURS! WE DRIVE EVERYONE ELSE OFF. STOP PROGRESS!

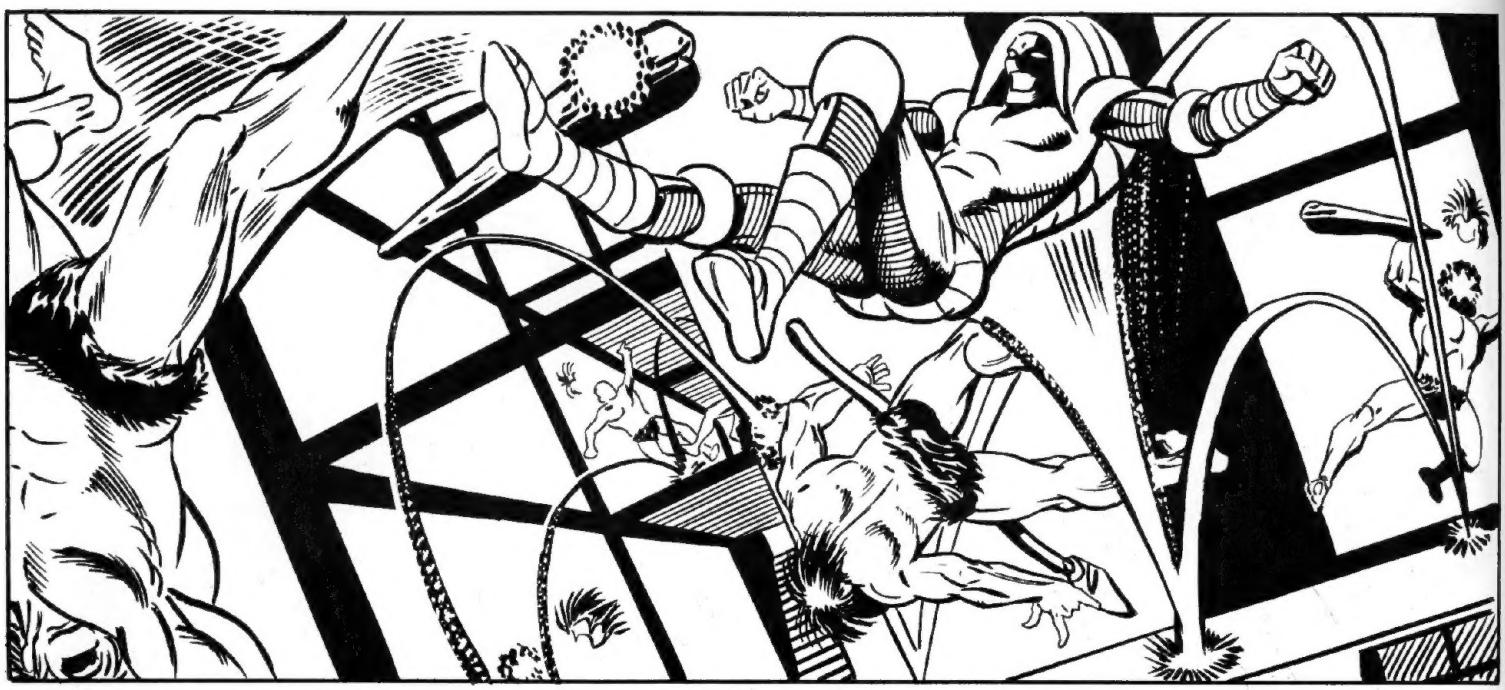

YAH, I HEARD ABOUT THE ATTACK ON BER'S SITE! I SENT BLEEDER TO CONTACT THOSE SAVAGES AND COMBINE FORCES IN A COMMON CAUSE!
BRILLIANT MOVE!
$$#*
AND WITH BANKER BOB'S HELP, I GOT EVERYONE BELIEVING BER'S CREDIT IS NO GOOD! EVERYONE HE DEALS WITH NOW WANTS CASH!
..CREATIVE THINKING!
SO HE'S GOT 50,000 IN COLD CASH TO PAY FOR WHATEVER HE NEEDS... AND IF WE TAKE IT.. HE'S BROKE!
MAYOR MOTT, I KNOW SOME GUYS NOT AFRAID TO GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY WITH EVIL MONEY! HEH! HEH!

WE'LL TAKE STATION WAGON! GET PLENTY OF CANNED FOODS, DRINKS, ALSO PORTABLE STOVE, T.V., BLANKETS. WE DON'T KNOW HOW LONG BEFORE WE FIND OUR NOBLE PRIMITIVE FRIENDS!
YES, MR. BLEEDER!
NO REAL DAMAGE AT THE SITE BUT I'M BETTING OUR TROUBLES ARE NOT OVER!
NOT WITH ALL THAT COLD CASH HERE, MR. BER!
WE'LL KEEP A GUARD ON IT DAY AND NIGHT! WOULD ANYONE DARE TRY TO GET IT?
IT'S A TEMPTATION EVEN FOR THOSE NOT OUT TO STOP ME BUILDING!
I DON'T WANT TO KNOW ANYTHING! JUST GET THE MONEY AND DON'T GET CAUGHT..OR RECOGNIZED!
HEH! HEH! LEAVE IT TO OTTO THE UNDERTAKER!
IEYAHIEOWAIEOIE
..A DUMMY?!
..IS US!..WHA..
4.


STEP ON IT! * NO DOUGH! ..LUCKY TO GET AWAY!
..THE NUT IS BACK! GET THE #@%! OFF!
I'M GLAD I LISTENED TO YOU! I SURE HOPE YOU CAN STOP FUTURE TROUBLE!
..BER IS JUST A GREEDY, SELFISH MONEY HUNGRY, AMBITIOUS #@!
..NEED A LAW TO CREATE JOBS, GET MONEY, ..WHATEVER WE WANT!
I WANT WHAT OTHERS HAVE!
I WANT NECESSITIES, OTHERS WANT LUXURIES!
LIFE WAS BETTER BEFORE TECHNOLOGY AND PROGRESS!
WE CAN'T LET PEOPLE ACHIEVE AS THEY PLEASE!
WOW! TOOLS!
..TAKING UP A HOBBY!
..TO RELAX ..ENJOY!
..PRACTICAL!
THIS IS A BARGAIN!
..ITEMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD!
A BETTER MODEL!
..MAKES LIFE COMFORTABLE!
..GET A DOZEN!
..SAVE TIME.. WORK!
..BER'S FACTORY WILL JUST SPOIL OUR ENVIROMENT, POLUTE OUR AIR AND REDUCE OUR LIFE SPAN!
..NEED!
..WANT!
..CAN AFFORD!
..IF WE STOP PEOPLE THINKING..WE STOP NEW IDEAS..GADGETS ..WE STOP PRODUCTION..WE STOP PROGRESS..STOP POLLUTION!.. SIMPLE!
GIVE ME THE CAVE MAN DAYS OVER TODAY!
DEPARTMENT STORE.

..BUT WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS. ALLIES, BROTHERS!
YOU LIE! YOU DEVIL PROGRESS FOLLOWERS! YOU TRESPASS ON OUR PLANET!
YOU EVEN WEAR CLOTHES OF PROGRESS! YOU INSULT, DEFILE, HURT OUR NATURE!
WE HERE FIRST SO CAR, FOOD CLOTHES ALL STOLEN FROM US! WE GIVE IT BACK TO NATURE GOD!
YOU MUST PAY FOR YOUR CRIMES AGAINST NATURE GOD! YOU DON'T BELONG ON OUR EARTH! YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO LIVE HERE! GET OFF, NOW!
OFF! GOD OF NATURE ACCEPT OUR HUMBL OFFERING.. THE UNHOLY VIOLATERS OF YOUR PURE, DIVINE, PRIMITIVE STATE!
..FAILED!# NOW BER WILL BE ON GUARD! WE'LL NEVER GET CONTROL OF THAT LAND ..TO SELL BACK TO THE CITY FOR A FAT PROFIT! WE USE ILLEGAL MEANS AND FAIL?! WHERE DID WE GO WRONG!
WE'RE NOT THROUGH YET! IF BLEEDER FINDS THOSE SAVAGES, THEY CAN WRECK BER.. WE'LL TAKE OVER!
BRILLIANT! THE ILLEGAL IS STILL PRACTICAL!
BLEEDER!? NOW WHAT?
SAVE ME, DOCTOR, STOP THE PAIN, I DON'T WANT TO SUFFER.. DIE!
OWWW
WAIT! WE DON'T NEED THE REAL SAVAGES.. FAKE SAVAGES WILL WORK JUST AS WELL, YET, THE REAL ONES WILL BE BLAMED!
..IDEA IS PURE GENUIS!

..PUT THESE ON!
..ARMS TO PRO TECT YOURSELVES!
..CRUCIAL DETAIL!
DON'T LEAVE A MAN FIT TO WORK OR A PIECE OF MATERIAL FIT TO REUSE!.. AND DON'T FORGET TO ACT LIKE SAVAGES!
GRRR! EVIL POISONERS OF SACRED AIR!
GULP!.. THE REAL M'COYS! YOU GOT US ALL WRONG!.. WE CAN TALK THIS OVER..COME TO AN UNDER-STANDING..MAKE A DEAL..
EYIEOAWEEOIEYAWEOOIEAIF



..TRAITOR TO NATURE!.. EAT DEVIL PROGRESS FOOD..NOT EAT NATURE'S GRASS, BARK, DIRT!
..YOU TRAITOR!.. YOU USE PROGRESS CLUB INSTEAD OF NATURE'S!
..YOU BUILD DEVIL FIRE, BURN NATURE.. DIRTY HER PURE AIR!.. TRAITOR!
YOU UNCLEAN, SACRIFICE YOU TO NATURE!
I HOLY PURE.. SACRIFICE YOU!
..YOU TRAITOR TO GOD NATURE!

THANKS TO SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS, YOU WILL ALL SOON BE BACK ON YOUR FEET!
OH, NO!
..HELPED BY PROGRESS!
GROAN!

ISN'T THERE ANYPLACE WHERE A MAN CAN ESCAPE FROM THE EVILS OF PROGRESS AND ENJOY PURE NOBLE PRIMITIVE NATURE?
R.I.P.

MOVE FORWARD!
ACHIEVE!
STOP!
RETURN TO OLD WAYS!
SLOW DOWN!
GROW!
TRY! WHY TRY!
GIVE UP!
NO MORE PROGRESS!
..DO BETTER!
..COAST ALONG!
..STOP IMPROVING!
..STOP THINKING!
..STOP LIFE!
STOP!
ADVANCE!
HALT!
RETREAT!
SURRENDER!
8. END

# AND SO...

Before I close this issue and tell what lies ahead, it seem in order to give a history of Comic Crusader.

Issue #1 - March, 1968.
The cover featuring the golden age Green Lantern and the majority of the interior art was done by myself. Artists are hard to find when you're starting out. The exceptions were Bob Cosgrove and Bill Loring (an ad agency artist). Three items made this issue a landmark for its era and set the course for the future. 1. An interview with an artist that would soon revolutionize the comic industry and set the pace for those that followed him...JIM STERANKO. 2. The start of a series called "The First Inhumans." A series about super funny animal characters that received wide aclaim and got C.C. mentioned in DC's "Wonderful World of Fanzines" column. 3. The first Defender story. Because the stories were well thought out, this character became one of fandom's favorite ama-heroes.
Issue #2 - June, 1968
Again the cover and most of the art were by me. Exceptions - Bob Cosgrove and Diana Salford (art teacher). P.A.L. an ad agency friend who did not want his name revealed did work too. I inked his art. The important feature of this issue was the article Bob and I did on Steve Ditko. It led us to meet and become friends with Steve. A friendship we both value highly. His art soon graced C.C.'s pages and you'll note he's here for the "last hurrah."
Issue #3 - Sept. 1968
This was a special issue that was soon to become a tradition---C.C.'s first Convention coverage issue. The 1968 Scarp Con - The predecessor to the now famed New York July 4th Con's. This issue was so popular, I went into a second printing.
Issue #4 - Dec. 1968
This issue marked the start of other artists and writers doing work for C.C. The cover was by a man who I'd come to admire (and still do very much today) JOHN FANTUCCHIO. John did some of the most outstanding art ever done in fandom and I was elated to have him do some for me. A Jim Steranko Nick Fury drawing and a Steve Ditko Mr. A. made this issue tops. Other art by Donna Astin, Bob Cosgrove, Joe Kurnave and a super fan Steve Fritz. Now I was really in luck! I had aquired a writer who produced some of the most imaginative work ever done in fandom. He became a close friend...I had met TOM FAGAN! Tom did some of the greatest articles ever read in fandom for C.C. His work is legend even today.
Issue #5 - March, 1969
A Jim Steranko cover of my hero The Defender. Art by Steve Ditko, Steve Fritz, Bill Wilson, John Fantucchio, Wade Hampton, Ronn Foss (one of my favorite fan artists), P.A.L. and Dennis Fujitake. Dennis was one of three fans from Hawaii who made C.C. a pleasure to put out. The pro article was on Gardner Fox and I was soon fortunate to meet this comic book legend.
Issue #6 - Summer 1969
A banner issue! Steve Ditko has part 1 of an 8 page strip in it. Full page Steranko Green Lantern and a cover by Fantucchio. Plus art by Astin, Fritz, Foss, Cosgrove, Fujitake, Gary Kato and Keith Fukumitsu. (*Note: Greim fouls up and spells Fukumitsu wrong for a number of issues.) Bob and I do a Joe Orlando article that will be reprinted in a Nostalgia Press EC book. Tom Fagan is in this and future issues.
Issue #7 - Fall 1969
Another convention issue. Rich Buckler cover with a foul up on lettering. The word "the" is repeated twice in the cover's moral message. First art by Bill Black - fandom's best inker and my good friend. Part 2 of the Steve Ditko strip and a Steranko S.H.I.E.L.D. illo. New artists this issue (most of the ones I've mentioned were still represented, but to save space I'll only list ones not mentioned before.) - Anthony Kowalik (who proves to be one of the top idea men in fandom), Al Bradford (both he and Bob will become godfathers to my daughters, so that gives you an idea what I think of him), Bill Lund, Max Gottfried, Len Wein (a real pro even before he became one), Dave Transue, and Mike Howell.
Issue #8
Don Newton cover. Don's always there when I need him - a pal! Rutland Halloween Parade review. Dan Adkins interview and art. Long Defender strip and a Defender splash by Steve Ditko. Back cover of a nude Black Cat by Steranko causes no end of comment in fandom. New artists: Dave Harwood, Jim Shull, and Wendy Fletcher. Wendy would marry Richard Pini and we'd meet years later and become close friends.
Issue #9
First color cover and it's by Steranko. A beautiful drawing of The Ray. Bill Black and I create The Shade (ama-hero). Interview with a great guy, Joe Sinnott. Don Newton profile. Bullseye article with Kirby art. New artists: Gene Colan and Klaus Janson. Fantucchio back cover of The Spirit.
Issue #10
I do a cover again...the Green Lantern Corps and it's a convention issue. No one's ever done a Con issue as well as C.C. and this will be my last. New artists: Paul Neary, Bob Kline (art and profile) John Buscema inked by Sinnott, Mike Royer, Ronn Sutton, Jim Jones (fan friend), and Richard Corben. Full page Steranko and Don Newton inks me for the first time on the back cover. Both New York and Washington D.C.'s Metro Con are covered.
Issue #11
Flash Gordon Issue! Al Williamson cover and interior art. Mike Royer (love him) was responsible for almost the whole issue. Photos from the serials and part of the breakdowns of the serials were by him. Bob Cosgrove learns to hate Flash Gordon - won't watch the serials even today. I pencil and Bill Black inks a 4 page Flash Gordon history. Unpublished Raymond drawing. New artists: Dave Cockrum, Gray Morrow, Berni Wrightson, Wayne Pond, John Adkins Richardson, and Russ Manning. Contents of this issue are an all time high.
Issue #12
Barbarian issue. Bob Juanillo wash cover. New Tom Fagan article on Planet Comics' "Lost World" series. Beautiful Steranko full page splash goes with it. Editorial page by Bill Stillwell. Foss "Eclipse" strip. New artists: John Byrne, Mike Roberts, Clyde Caldwell, Jim Garrison. Frank Thorne interview by Craig Battmer (with art by Thorne). Full page Conan illo by Wrightson. Full page Thor by Buscema/Sinnott. Tony Isabella article on Conan. I found a friend in Tony. John Mansfield does a Carlos Gimenez article (top Spanish artist).
Issue #13
Steranko Defender cover. Long Defender story - Ditko Mr. A. story. Article on "13" oriented characters by Tom Fagan. Ronn Fortier interviews Joe Staton. Gil Kane back cover.
Issue #14
Magic issue. Fujitake/Black cover of Ibis. Raymond Miller article on Ibis - Fawcett Pub's man of magic. I meet and interview a wonderful guy...Mandrake the Magician artist FRED FREDERICKS. Kirby page and centerfold of The Demon. Steranko Wonder Woman (heh!) Ditko H Series strip, and my favorite Tom Fagan article on Mr. Mystic. New artists: Carlos Gimenez Beautiful Wendi Pini back cover.
Issue #15
Captain Marvel issue. Color Kurt Schaffenberger cover. Don Newton and John Clark do a Capt. Marvel vs. Sivana article. Bob, Al and I meet the two most interesting men I've ever interviewed...Jack and Otto Binder. Kurt Schaffenberger interview (another great guy!), a Ditko strip, A BILL EVERETT SALUTE. New artists: Mac Raboy, C.C. Beck, Dave Gibbons and Syd Shores
Issue #16
Joe Staton E-Man cover. Nick Cuti and Joe Staton interview (Staton art). Gil Kane "Blackmark" illo. Russ Manning interview on Magnus Robot Fighter (with art). New Gods article by Bob Cosgrove with the meeting of Darkseid and Orion by Kirby and Sinnott. Marie Severin interview/art by Bruce Patterson. Frank McLaughlin strip and a Steve Hickman back cover. New artists: Alan Hutchinson and Carl Taylor. Mike Royer full page Magnus art.
Issue #17
DEATH ISSUE!

Well that's C.C.'s history. Hope I haven't left anyone out! As for me, I'm now working on Comic Crusader Storybook. This will be a huge book of fandom's top ama-heroes. The Defender (yeah he's alive) will be there, as well as Space Guardian, The Shade, Dr. Weird, White Raven, The Eclipse and many more. There will also be a number of pro illustrations of these heroes making it a volume to remember. All the art is of pro quality and should top anything ever produced along these lines. Watch for the ads sometime in the future. Until we meet again you can read my comments in Alan Light's TBG, or write me at BOX 132, DEDHAM, MASS. 02026.

Best- MARTIN L. GREIM

DAVE COCKRUM